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# SYLLOGE ON WEST ASIA

**FOCUS, NUCLEAR, MISSILES & OTHER  
SECURITY ISSUES IN WEST ASIA**

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## IRAN

### Iran's envoy: IAEA report a regular technical document

Islamic Republic News Agency, December 1, 2021

Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Envoy to the Vienna-based International Organizations Mohammad Reza Ghaebi said on Wednesday that the latest report released by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Iran's nuclear activities is an updated regular technical report. He said it is based on a report provided by Iran to the agency. The official told the press that the IAEA has already presented the result of its verification tests to member states.

According to the report, Iran has begun feeding its IR-6 centrifuges in Fordo site with hexafluoride gas to produce 20% enriched uranium and also permitted the IAEA inspectors to run their extraordinary verification tests there.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84562656/Iran-s-envoy-IAEA-report-a-regular-technical-document>

### Khatibzadeh: Zionist regime trumpeting lies to poison Vienna talks

Islamic Republic News Agency, December 1, 2021

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Wednesday that "Israeli regime whose existence relies on tension is at it again, trumpeting lies to poison Vienna talks". "Israeli regime whose existence relies on tension is at it again, trumpeting lies to poison Vienna talks," Khatibzadeh wrote on his Twitter account on Wednesday. He added that "all parties in the room now face a test of their independence & political will to carry out the job—irrespective of the fake news designed to destroy prospects for success".

The new round of Vienna talks aimed at lifting outrageous and illegal US sanctions began last Monday, with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani, heading the Iranian negotiating team in Vienna.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84562564/Khatibzadeh-Zionist-regime-trumpeting-lies-to-poison-Vienna>

### Iran dismisses any military ties with Yemen

Islamic Republic News Agency, December 1, 2021

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh dismissed any military ties with Yemen by the Islamic Republic of Iran, saying Iran has never had a military presence in Yemen to be targeted by the aggressors. Khatibzadeh dismissed reports that a Saudi-led coalition's attack on Yemen and the alleged targeting of an alleged secret base belonging to Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) experts in Sana'a as "baseless". He ruled out any military ties between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Yemen. Such baseless declarations are made to deflect the nations of the region and the world's public notice from the crimes of the aggressing states, the Iranian spokesman noted. He further pointed out that the Islamic Republic of Iran has never had a military presence in Yemen to be targeted by the aggressors.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84562511/Iran-dismisses-any-military-ties-with-Yemen>

### Iran: IAEA Report on Iran's IR-6 Centrifuges Nothing New

Fars News Agency, December 2, 2021

Caretaker of Iran's mission at the International Atomic Energy Agency Mohammad Reza Qa'ebi said that the IAEA's report on Iran's use of advanced centrifuges to produce enriched uranium is nothing new, adding that the country's

nuclear installations are under supervision of the UN nuclear watchdog. A new report by the International Atomic Energy Agency said that Iran has started producing enriched uranium with more efficient home-made advanced IR-6 centrifuges at its Fordow plant. Qa'ebi said that the report is nothing new and is "a routine technical updated report". He added that Iran had informed the Agency before taking the actions as usual, and the IAEA, in turn has informed its members about them on a regular basis. The Iranian diplomat added that "according to the IAEA report, Iran has started injecting gas into IR-6 centrifuges at Fordow to produce 20% enriched uranium hexafluoride". He added that "Iran has allowed the IAEA to increase its verification at the site".

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000911000451/Iran-IAEA-Repr-n-Iran's-IR-6-Centrifuges-Nhing-New>

### **Vienna talks proceeding with sanctions removal priority: Iranian FM**

Islamic Republic News Agency, December 2, 2021

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian said on Thursday that Vienna talks are going on "with seriousness" and that removal of the US-imposed sanctions on Iran are the core of the talks. "Vienna Talks proceeding with seriousness and sanctions removal as fundamental priority. Expert talks are continuing too. In daily contact with top negotiator [Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister and head of the Iranian team in Vienna talks] Ali Bagheri Kani," Amirabdollahian wrote on his Twitter account. He added, "Good deal within reach if the West shows good will, we seek rational, sober & result-oriented dialogue." Bagheri Kani on Wednesday met and held talks with representatives of the three

European countries - namely, the UK, France, and Germany - in Vienna.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84562768/Vienna-talks-proceeding-with-sanctions-removal-priority-Iranian>

### **IAEA chief: There is no 90% enrichment in Iran**

Islamic Republic News Agency, December 2, 2021

Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi has said that there is no 90% enrichment at the moment in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The IAEA is not a party to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action aka JCPOA, he said, adding that as an inspector and guarantor of the agreement, the Agency closely monitors the ongoing negotiations in Vienna. The JCPOA had set a limit of 3.67 percent for enrichment, but now 60 percent enrichment is being done, he pointed out. Iran is enriching at 20 percent at Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant and is increasing it, he added.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84563417/IAEA-chief-There-is-no-90-enrichment-in-Iran>

### **Bagheri Kani: Iran submits proposed text in Vienna**

Islamic Republic News Agency, December 2, 2021

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister and head of the Iranian team in Vienna talks Ali Bagheri Kani said on Thursday that the Islamic Republic of Iran had submitted two proposed texts with regards to removal of US oppressive sanctions and nuclear issues. Bagheri Kani went on to say that last night Iran provided two proposed texts to the other side, one of which contains Iran's views on removal of sanctions and the other one is on the issue of Iran's nuclear actions. Normally, the other side, reviews these proposed texts and becomes ready for

serious talks and negotiations with Iran on the proposed texts, but the important point here is that these negotiations have various and numerous international implications.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84563088/Bagheri-Kani-Iran-submits-proposed-text-in-Vienna>

### **Blinken says nuclear talks halted because Iran ‘doesn’t seem serious’**

The Times of Israel, December 3, 2021

United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Friday that this week’s round of negotiations between world powers and Iran in Vienna was halted because Tehran does not seem to be serious about reaching an agreement with the US that would see a joint return to compliance with the nuclear agreement. “What we’ve seen in the last couple of days is that Iran right now does not seem to be serious about doing what’s necessary to return to compliance, which is why we ended this round of talks in Vienna,” Blinken told Reuters. The secretary of state said the US would now consult with its allies, including Israel, on how best to move forward. “And we will see if Iran has any interest in engaging seriously, but the window is very, very tight.”

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/blinken-says-nuclear-talks-halted-because-iran-doesnt-seem-serious/>

### **Iran to look to East if no deal achieved in Vienna: Parliamentary VP**

Islamic Republic News Agency, December 4, 2021

Iran's Vice President for Parliamentary Affairs Mohammad Hosseini said on Saturday Iran would protect its interest via the East if the talks in Vienna to remove sanctions failed to achieve a deal. Speaking in a meeting with university students in Kerman on the occasion of Student's Day,

Hosseini said that Iran's negotiating team of 40 was formed by experts in various fields and have full authority to conclude the talks. He cited Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei as saying that the economic power in the world was leaning towards China and India and Iran could protect its interest via these countries if no deal was reached in Vienna.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84565128/Iran-to-look-to-East-if-no-deal-achieved-in-Vienna-Parliamentary>

### **French president: Difficult to reach nuclear deal if Gulf, Israel not involved**

The Times of Israel, December 4, 2021

In striking comments Friday, French President Emmanuel Macron suggested Israel should be part of discussions on a return to the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran. “I think everyone is conscious of the fact that not talking, not trying to find a new framework on both nuclear and regional issues, weakens everybody and is a factor in increasing confliction,” the French president said. “It is also important to reengage a slightly broader dynamic and involve regional powers as well,” he added. “It is difficult to reach an agreement if the Gulf states, Israel and all those whose security is directly affected are not involved.”

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/french-president-difficult-to-reach-nuclear-deal-if-gulf-israel-not-involved/>

### **Iran Tests Defense System above Natanz**

Fars News Agency, December 5, 2021

Iran’s Air Defense Force announced that it has fired missiles on Saturday night to test rapid reaction forces above the city of Natanz in the Central parts of the country. The statement came after reports of a large explosion that was heard in Natanz. Natanz

air defense commander confirmed the report about the test fire of the missiles in the sky above Natanz, where a nuclear site is located, but emphasized that there is nothing to worry about. The commander added that such exercises are carried out in a completely safe zone in full coordination with the integrated air defense network to assess the systems located in the area.

No damage was reported, according to initial investigations, the commander noted. Meanwhile, an informed local source said that the blast in the desert area of Natanz city has nothing to do with nuclear facilities and caused no damage.

The unnamed source said the missile was fired in a safe zone 20km from Natanz to test air defense.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000914000176/Iran-Tess-Defense-Sysem-abve-Naanz>

### **IRGC Seizes Illegal Weapons Shipment in Northwestern Iran**

Fars News Agency, December 5, 2021

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps forces have seized a shipment of illegal weapons in the Northwestern province of West Azarbaijan, an IRGC statement said. "Some weapons and two vehicles were seized from arms traffickers at the border areas of Orumiyeh city, the capital of West Azarbaijan," the IRGC said. "The counter-revolutionary armed groups were trying to deliver these weapons to the elements affiliated with them with the aim of harming security and stirring riots inside the country," it added. The IRGC statement pointed out that three individuals have been arrested in the operation against the arms traffickers and have been handed over to judicial authorities.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000914000215/IRGC-Seizes-Illegal-Weapons-Shipmen-in-Nrhwesern-Iran>

### **Iran-Pakistan maritime cooperation can lead strategic ties: Navy official**

Tehran Times, December 5, 2021

An Iranian Navy official said on Sunday that Iran-Pakistan naval interactions will lead to deep and strategic relations between the two friendly and neighboring countries. Speaking during a ceremony held for the arrival of the Pakistani fleet to the first naval zone of the Iranian Navy in Bandar Abbas, Captain Qader Vazifeh also said these naval interactions surely prove that regional countries, especially the friendly and Muslim ones, can manage their own region, IRNA reported. The Navy official went on to say that there is no need for the presence of trans-regional forces in the Strait of Hormuz, the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman. The Pakistani fleet, consisting of three warships, docked in the 1st naval zone of the Iranian Navy in Bandar Abbas on Sunday morning and will stay there until Wednesday.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/467754/Iran-Pakistan-maritime-cooperation-can-lead-strategic-ties-Navy>

### **Iraq exempted from US sanctions on Iran gas, electricity**

Islamic Republic News Agency, December 5, 2021

The United States extended Iraq's exemption from American sanctions on Iran one more time, a move that can be considered as Washington's retreat from its sanction policy. Iraq, as one of the main importers of Iranian energy, has been able to resort to such exemptions so far, and the US administration has recently exempted Iraq from the American embargo on Iran's gas and electricity. The United States Department of State has announced that Washington extended Iraq's waiver from the US sanctions against Iran to provide the Arab country with the opportunity to go ahead with its transactions with Tehran in



activists, and prisons where activists have been held in brutal conditions. The Treasury also placed several Syrian officials on its sanctions blacklist for their roles in political repression and chemical gas attacks, and Uganda's military intelligence chief was hit with sanctions for extreme abuse of people arrested for their nationality or political beliefs.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/us-hits-iran-with-new-sanctions-over-rights-abuses-as-nuclear-talks-flounder/>

### **Intensifying bans will fail to create leverage on Iran amid Vienna talks, Tehran tells U.S.**

Tehran Times, December 8, 2021

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh on Tuesday lambasted the U.S. for its fresh sanctions against a number of the Iranian officials and entities over allegations of human rights violations, suggesting that intensifying anti-Iran measures will fail to create leverage over Tehran amid talks in Vienna to lift sanctions against the Islamic Republic. Khatibzadeh said such a move contravenes the anticipated "seriousness and goodwill" needed to advance the Vienna talks. The response by the spokesman came shortly after the U.S. Treasury and State Department announced sanctions against a dozen Iranian government officials and organizations over allegations of human rights abuses.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/467884/Intensifying-bans-will-fail-to-create-leverage-on-Iran-amid-Vienna>

### **Biden orders to prepare 'additional measures' in case Iran nuclear diplomacy fails**

The Times of Israel, December 9, 2021

US President Joe Biden has ordered his staff to prepare "additional measures" if

troubled talks over Iran's nuclear program, which resumed Thursday in Vienna, fail to reach a resolution. "The president has asked his team to be prepared in the event that diplomacy fails and we must turn to other options," White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki told reporters. "We will have no choice but to take additional measures," she added.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/biden-orders-to-prepare-additional-measures-in-case-iran-nuclear-diplomacy-fails/>

### **IRGC chief says Iran firm to boost military power on 'daily basis'**

Tehran Times, December 11, 2021

Iran is determined to broaden its military power on a 'daily basis', the IRGC commander said on Saturday. Major General Hossein Salami made the remarks during a ceremony in which 110 new speedboats were delivered to the IRGC Navy's fleet in southern port of Bandar Abbas on the shores of the Persian Gulf. The fact that these new speed boats are coming into service are a proof that Iran is increasing its military prowess based on the strategy it has devised, Salami remarked. Calling such an approach a "strategic logic", the senior commander added, "Such enhancement of power is taking place quite purposefully and intelligently," Tasnim reported.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/467974/IRGC-chief-says-Iran-firm-to-boost-military-power-on-daily-basis>

### **Iran Unveils 3 New Home-Made Radio Medicine**

Fars News Agency, December 14, 2021

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami announced on Tuesday that the country's scientists have produced 3 new radio medicines manufactured locally by the

Iranian researchers. Addressing a seminar on the development of the use of radiation in the food industry, Eslami pointed to the production of radiopharmaceuticals in Iran, saying that yesterday 3 new radio medicine were unveiled which are considered necessary for the medical sector of the society. Newly produced radiopharmaceuticals are under the process to receive final licenses to be used by the medical sector, he added. Eslami added that the three radiopharmaceuticals are produced to treat patients with prostate cancer, and other cancers, including the head and neck and large intestines.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000923000618/Iran-Unveils-3-New-Hme-Made-Radi-Medicine>

### **Iran preps space flight amid increasing tensions with Israel, US over nuclear talks**

The Times of Israel, December 12, 2021

Iran appears to be preparing for a space launch as negotiations continue in Vienna over its tattered nuclear deal with world powers, according to an expert and satellite images. The likely blast off at Iran's Imam Khomeini Spaceport comes as Iranian state media has offered a list of upcoming planned satellite launches in the works for the Islamic Republic's civilian space program, which has been beset by a series of failed launches. Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard runs its own parallel program that successfully put a satellite into orbit last year. Iran's foray into space comes at a precarious time for the Islamic Republic, with Israel and the United States considering secondary options in case talks fail, discussing possible military drills in order to practice destroying Iranian nuclear facilities in a potential worst-case scenario. Israel already believes that Iran is

ratcheting up its forces into order to attack neighboring nations.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/iran-preps-space-flight-amid-increasing-tensions-with-israel-us-over-nuclear-talks/>

### **Iran: Karaj Facility No Subject to Safeguards Agreement**

Fars News Agency, December 14, 2021

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami said that based on the nuclear agreement, TESA Karaj Complex is no subject to the safeguards agreement between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Karaj facility is an unresolved issue between Tehran and the IAEA and based on the text of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the TESA Karaj Complex is not subject to safeguards rules, Eslami told reporters on Tuesday. Tehran's relations with IAEA must be in line with the rules and regulations of the safeguards agreements and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), he added.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000923000769/Iran-Karaj-Faciliy-N-Sbjec-Safegards-Agreemen>

### **2015 nuclear deal no longer sufficient for reality of Iran in 2022, IAEA chief says**

The Times of Israel, December 14, 2021

The head of the United Nations nuclear watchdog warned Tuesday that the restrictions faced by his inspectors in Iran threaten to give the world only a "very blurred image" of Tehran's program as it enriches uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels. Speaking in a wide-ranging interview to The Associated Press, Rafael Mariano Grossi said he wanted to tell Iran that there was "no way around" his



inspectors at the International Atomic Energy Agency if the Islamic Republic wanted to be “a respected country in the community of nations.”

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/2015-nuclear-deal-no-longer-sufficient-for-reality-of-iran-in-2022-iaea-chief-says/>

### **Iran Confirms Agreement with IAEA**

Fars News Agency, December 15, 2021

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said on Wednesday that his country and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have reached a good agreement last night. "Last night we reached a good agreement with the IAEA that could address some of the alleged concerns about Iran's peaceful nuclear program," Amir Abdollahian said, addressing the Iranian ambassadors to the neighboring states in Tehran. He added that the agreement will increase mutual cooperation between Iran and the IAEA.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000924000635/Iran-Cnfirms-Agreemen-wih-IAEA>

### **Iran Allows IAEA to Install New Cameras at Karaj Facility to Obviate Misunderstandings**

Fars News Agency, December 15, 2021

Iran reached an agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency to install the IAEA's new cameras at TESA Karaj complex to remove misunderstandings about the country's nuclear program amid the Vienna talks, a report said. Iran voluntarily allowed the IAEA replace the damaged CCTV cameras at Karaj's site with new cameras after reaching an agreement with the UN nuclear watchdog, Nournews, affiliated to Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), reported on Wednesday. The report came after Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said on

Wednesday that Tehran had reached a good agreement with the IAEA last night.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000924000675/Iran-Allws-IAEA-Insall-New-Cameras-a-Karaj-Faciliy-Obviae>

## **IRAQ**

### **Al-Kadhimi stresses the need to close ranks in the face of the remnants of terrorism**

Iraqi News Agency, December 3, 2021

The Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi stressed today, Friday, the need to close ranks and not to underestimate ISIS terrorist gangs. The spokesman for the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Yahya Rasoul, stated in a statement received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), that "the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces followed with great interest the cowardly attack carried out by ISIS terrorist gangs on the village of Khadrjija near the Qarachogh Mountains, which killed a number of civilians and Peshmerga forces.". Al-Kadhimi stressed that "the Peshmerga forces are within the national defense system and work side by side with their brothers in our valiant armed forces to secure cities and regions,".

<https://ina.iq/eng/15890-al-kadhimi-stresses-the-need-to-close-ranks-in-the-face-of-the-remnants-of-terrorism.html>

### **Joint Ops and Peshmerga agreement to strike terrorism**

Iraqi News Agency, December 4, 2021

Joint Operations Command confirmed on Saturday, the agreement with the Ministry of Peshmerga to carry out large and qualitative operations in the areas of security gaps between the federal government and the Kurdistan Regional Government - KRG, as well as an agreement to increase field coordination in

its intelligence and operational axes as well as, the air strikes. "Today's meeting between the Joint Operations Command and the Ministry of Peshmerga came after a series of periodic meetings, and was preceded by the opening of joint coordination centers in Diyala, Kirkuk, Makhmour and Western Nineveh, in addition to two main centers in Baghdad and Erbil, as these centers have begun actual work, and today we confirmed many of the issues raised by a high-ranking delegation from the Ministry of Peshmerga and the leaders of the axes," said the First Lieutenant-General Abdul-Amir Al-Shammari, Deputy Commander of the Joint Operations Command, to Al-Iraqiya News TV, followed by the Iraqi News Agency (INA).

<https://ina.iq/eng/15914-joint-ops-and-peshmerga-agreement-to-strike-terrorism.html>

### **Iraqi F-16 air strike kills 6 terrorists in Anbar desert**

Iraqi News Agency, December 6, 2021

The Security Media Cell announced on Monday, that 6 terrorists were killed in an air strike by Iraqi F-16 warplanes in Anbar desert. "With a qualitative operation, Joint Targeting Cell for the Joint Operations Command detected a den of Daesh terrorist gangs north of the 160 kilometer area in Anbar desert, by means of a reconnaissance plane of the International Coalition and instructed the Air Force Command to carry out an aircraft strike by Iraqi F-16s," according to a statement by Security Media Cell, received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA).

<https://ina.iq/eng/15949-iraqi-f-16-air-strike-kills-6-terrorists-in-anbar-desert.html>

### **Al-Aidani: 8 civilians killed and injured in Basra bombing**

Iraqi News Agency, December 7, 2021

Eight civilians were killed and wounded Tuesday in a bombing in central Basra province. "An unidentified explosion took place in the center of the province, killing four civilians and wounding four others," Basra governor Asaad al-Aidani said in an audio recording obtained by the Iraqi news agency INA. A security source told the Iraqi news agency INA that the blast in Basra was caused by a booby trapped motorcycle near the Al-Samoud Bridge.

<https://ina.iq/eng/15962-al-aidani-8-civilians-killed-and-injured-in-basra-bombing.html>

### **New large-scale security operation launched in Diyala, JOC reports**

Iraqi News Agency, December 8, 2021

The Joint Operations Command announced today, Wednesday, the launch of a large-scale security operation to hunt down ISIS terrorist remnants in Diyala province. The Deputy Chief of Joint Operations, Abdul Amir Al-Shammari, told the Iraqi News Agency (INA): "At 600 o'clock of this day, the Diyala Operations Command, in high coordination with the commands of the first and second axis in Peshmerga forces, began carrying out search and inspection operations along the separating borders with the Kurdistan Region on the outskirts of Khanaqin and Kifri districts, and on both banks of Diyala River". Al-Shammari added, "A force from the Counter-Terrorism Service, in partnership with special forces from KRG Guard, has started carrying out joint operations in areas of common security interest, with air support

from the air force, army aviation and the international coalition."

<https://ina.iq/eng/15985-new-large-scale-security-operation-launched-in-diyala-joc-reports.html>

### **Turkey strikes Yazidi militia in Iraq**

Al-Monitor, December 8, 2021

Turkey killed a Yazidi commander in Iraq today. Marwan Badal, who commands the Sinjar Resistance Units (YBS), was killed in a Turkish airstrike in Sinjar in western Iraq. The attack was carried out on his vehicle via an armed drone. Badal's two sons were with him at the time and survived the attack, according to Kurdish media outlets. The YBS is comprised of members of the Yazidi ethno-religious community, and Sinjar is a predominantly Yazidi area. Various armed groups operate in Sinjar, including affiliates of the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), as well as the Kurdistan Region's peshmerga security forces. The preponderance of armed groups is one reason pushing Yazidis to leave Iraq.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/12/turkey-strikes-yazidi-militia-iraq#ixzz7FftEDrXm>

### **International coalition: Our combat role in Iraq has ended**

Iraqi News Agency, December 9, 2021

The international coalition, announced on Thursday, the end of the role of combat forces in Iraq, following a meeting of the Technical Committee of the Iraqi military with its counterpart in the coalition forces. The coalition said in a statement received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA): "Our combat role in Iraq has ended, and Iraq has renewed its invitation to us, in this new stage. Our partnership with Iraq symbolizes the need for continuous vigilance." He added, "The terrorist gangs

of ISIS have lost, but they have not been permanently defeated, and we will provide advice and assistance to our partner forces to enable them to protect the people of Iraq."

<https://ina.iq/eng/16025-international-coalition-our-combat-role-in-iraq-has-ended.html>

### **JOC: Coalition Combat Forces Redeployed Outside Iraq**

Iraqi News Agency, December 9, 2021

The leadership of joint operations, confirmed on Thursday, the withdrawal of combat units from the international coalition and the redeployment outside Iraq. Lieutenant-General Abdul-Amir Al-Shammari, Deputy Commander of Joint Operations, told Al-Iraqiya News Channel, followed by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), that "over the past months, we have held a series of meetings with the international coalition to determine the shape of the relationship with the Iraqi forces." In addition he said "the international coalition forces handed over heavy equipment to the Iraqi forces before the withdrawal, and their numbers started decreasing since last July." Stressing that "the Iraqi side informed the international coalition that there is no need for ground forces, and the Iraqi forces control the land and carry out daily successful operations against ISIS terrorist gangs."

<https://ina.iq/eng/16029-joc-coalition-combat-forces-redeployed-outside-iraq.html>

### **General McKenzie says US troops to remain in Iraq**

Alarabiya News, December 10, 2021

The top US commander for the Middle East said Thursday that the United States will keep the current 2,500 troops in Iraq for the

foreseeable future, and he warned that he expects increasing attacks on US and Iraqi personnel by Iranian-backed militias determined to get American forces out. Marine Gen. Frank McKenzie said in an interview with The Associated Press at the Pentagon that despite the shift by US forces to a non-combat role in Iraq, they will still provide air support and other military aid for Iraq's fight against ISIS terrorist group.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2021/12/10/General-McKenzie-says-US-troops-to-remain-in-Iraq>

### **White House: No more US combat troops in Iraq**

Iraqi News Agency, December 13, 2021

The White House confirmed on Monday, that there are no longer American combat forces in Iraq. "The Assistant to the President and Coordinator for Middle East and North African Affairs Brett McGurk concluded a two-day visit to Iraq, where he consulted with a group of political and security leaders as they met in Baghdad with President Barham Salih and Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi in Erbil, with the President of the Kurdistan Region, Nechirvan Barzani," said the White House in a statement followed by the Iraqi News Agency (INA). The statement added, "McGurk confirmed during the meetings, President Joe Biden's commitment to the results of the strategic dialogue with the government of Iraq, and that there are no longer American forces serving in a combat role in Iraq, and this transition has become possible, due to the tremendous progress achieved by the Iraqi security forces, including the Peshmerga in leading the fight against Daesh terrorist gangs."

<https://ina.iq/eng/16123-white-house-no-more-us-fighting-troops-in-iraq.html>

### **Turkey targets PKK-linked Yazidis inside Iraq**

Al-Monitor, December 13, 2021

Turkey has targeted members of a local Yazidi armed group linked to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in northern Iraq and taken losses among its own forces stationed in the region. The military commander of the local armed faction, the Sinjar Resistance Units (YBS), Marwan Badal, was reportedly killed by a drone strike on his car Dec. 7. The counterterrorism directorate of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq called him a "commander of the PKK militias" in announcing the news. Three Turkish soldiers deployed to areas of northern Iraq were then killed in an attack by the PKK on Dec. 9. Turkey has forces at multiple bases in northern Iraq, which borders Turkey's southeast.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/12/turkey-targets-pkk-linked-yazidis-inside-iraq#ixzz7FftgagYc>

## **ISRAEL**

### **Iran nuclear talks must be halted, Bennett tells Blinken**

The Jerusalem Post, December 2, 2021

World powers must halt negotiations in Vienna to renew the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and impose strict measures against Tehran, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett told US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Thursday. "The prime minister addressed the ongoing and provocative violations of Iran in the nuclear field that are happening at the same time as the negotiations," an Israeli source emphasized. "The answer is not to give in to extortion but rather to make the Iranians pay an immediate price for their blackmail," the source added. "The answer is not to give in to extortion but

rather to make the Iranians pay an immediate price for their blackmail,” the source added.

<https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/bennett-calls-on-world-powers-to-halt-iran-nuclear-talks-687615>

### **Mossad Won't Allow Iran to 'Ever' Have Nuclear Weapons, Spy Agency Chief Says**

Haaretz, December 2, 2021

Mossad chief David Barnea promised Thursday that Israel will do "whatever it takes" to ensure Iran never develops a nuclear weapon, as talks between Tehran and world powers to revive the 2015 nuclear deal continue in Vienna. Iran "will not have nuclear weapons, not in the coming years, never," Barnea said at a ceremony for Mossad employees in Jerusalem, alongside Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and President Isaac Herzog. Barnea added in his rare public remarks on Thursday that Iran does not need "60-percent enriched uranium for civilian purposes," or "three sites with thousands of active centrifuges, unless there is an intention to develop nuclear weapons," disputing Tehran's claim that its nuclear program is peaceful.

<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-mossad-chief-vows-to-do-whatever-it-takes-to-stop-iran-s-nuclear-program-1.10435726>

### **US strongly opposed to settlement advancement, Blinken tells Bennett**

The Jerusalem Post, December 3, 2021

The United States "strongly emphasized" its objection to Israeli settlement advancement in a conversation Secretary of State Antony Blinken had with Prime Minister Naftali Bennett on Thursday. Blinken "strongly emphasized that Israel and the Palestinian Authority should refrain

from unilateral steps that exacerbate tensions and undercut efforts to advance a negotiated two-state solution, including advancing settlement activity," State Department spokesman Ned Price said in describing Thursday's conversation.

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/us-strongly-opposed-to-settlement-advancement-blinken-tells-bennett-687770>

### **US asks Israel not to carry out intelligence operations against Iran**

Anadolu Agency, December 3, 2021

Israeli media on Friday revealed that the US requested Tel Aviv not to execute any intelligence operations against Iran during the ongoing talks between the world powers and Iran over its nuclear program. The Israeli daily Yediot Ahronoth said Washington sent high-level messages to top Israeli security officials that it opposes any secret operations by Israel's intelligence service Mossad against Iran while the negotiations are taking place and in order not to break chances for the negotiations' success. It also said Mossad chief David Barnea is escorting Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz during his visit to Washington next week to coordinate efforts with the US side over Iran. Earlier on Thursday, Barnea said Mossad will take any action needed to prevent Iran's possession of nuclear weapons.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/us-asks-israel-not-to-carry-out-intelligence-operations-against-iran/2437647>

### **Better Turkey-Israel ties depend on Palestinian issue - Erdogan**

The Jerusalem Post, December 8, 2021

Turkey will improve its relations with Israel if it moves toward peace with the Palestinians, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Wednesday. "I'd had talks with Israel in the past, but Israel

needs to act more sensitively regarding its regional policies on Palestine,” Erdogan said, according to Daily Sabah. Israel and Turkey can exchange ambassadors again if Israel changes course in areas Turkey views as red flags, the Turkish president said, referring specifically to Jerusalem and al-Aqsa Mosque, the report said.

<https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/erdogan-better-turkey-israel-ties-depend-on-palestinian-issue-688184>

### **US, Israel to discuss military drills for Iran scenario: US official**

Alarabiya News, December 9, 2021

US and Israeli defense chiefs are expected on Thursday to discuss possible military exercises that would prepare for a worst-case scenario to destroy Iran's nuclear facilities should diplomacy fail and if their nations' leaders request it, a senior US official told Reuters. The scheduled US talks with visiting Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz follow an Oct. 25 briefing by Pentagon leaders to White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan on the full set of military options available to ensure that Iran would not be able to produce a nuclear weapon, the official said on Wednesday, speaking on condition of anonymity. Iran denies seeking nuclear weapons, saying it wants to master nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/world/2021/12/09/US-Israel-to-discuss-military-drills-for-Iran-scenario-US-official>

### **Gantz meets US defense chief, says Iran is ‘playing poker with a bad hand’**

The Times of Israel, December 9, 2021

Defense Minister Benny Gantz met on Thursday with his US counterpart Lloyd Austin at the Pentagon to discuss bilateral ties, the Iranian threat and Israel's qualitative military edge in the Middle East.

“The ministers discussed emerging challenges and opportunities in the region, with a particular focus on the developing challenge vis-à-vis the Iranian nuclear program and its regional aggression,” the statement said. In his remarks at the meeting, Gantz said that Iran “is not just a threat to our physical security” but “a concrete threat to our way of life and our shared values.” Austin said the US was “completely aligned in our commitment to preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.”

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/gantz-meets-us-defense-chief-warns-of-irans-hegemonic-aspirations/>

### **Israel consulted with US before covert strikes on Iran missile, nuke sites — report**

The Times of Israel, December 11, 2021

Israel consulted with the United States before carrying out covert strikes on an Iranian nuclear facility and a missile base earlier this year, the New York Times reported Saturday, as tensions rise between the two allies over Washington's desire to make a deal with Tehran. Israel spoke with the US ahead of a strike in September against a missile base, and one in June on a facility which made components for machines used to enrich uranium, sources told the newspaper. Israeli allegedly hit a secret missile base belonging to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in September and in June was said to have targeted a facility in Karaj used in the construction of centrifuges needed to enrich uranium.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-consulted-with-us-before-covert-strikes-on-iran-military-nuke-sites-report/>

### **Gantz: I told the US I've ordered the IDF to prepare a strike against Iran**

The Times of Israel, December 12, 2021

Defense Minister Benny Gantz said Friday that he notified US officials during meetings this week in Washington that he had instructed the Israel Defense Forces to prepare for a strike against Iran. In a briefing with reporters on the sidelines of the Israeli American Council's national summit in Florida, Gantz said the order he gave was to "prepare for the Iranian challenge at the operational level." A senior defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity, indicated that Gantz had presented a timeline for when such an attack might take place during his meetings with US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Secretary of State Antony Blinken, but the source did not specify further.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/gantz-i-told-the-us-ive-ordered-the-idf-to-prepare-a-strike-against-iran/>

## **LEBANON**

### **France to work with Saudi Arabia to resolve Lebanon crisis**

Ya Libnan, December 5, 2021

France and Saudi Arabia have held a joint phone call with Lebanon's Prime Minister Najib Mikati, a gesture seen as significant in resolving an unprecedented diplomatic crisis between Riyadh and Beirut. The call was made on Saturday as French President Emmanuel Macron visited Saudi Arabia after trips to the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. Emmanuel Macron says France and Saudi Arabia are committed to resolve diplomatic row between Riyadh and Beirut. Macron said that during the call with Mikati, he and Prince Salman relayed "a clear message Saudi Arabia and France want to be fully committed". "We want to commit ourselves to supporting the

Lebanese people and therefore do everything possible to ensure that trade and economic reopening can take place," Macron told reporters in remarks before departing the kingdom.

<https://yalibnan.com/2021/12/05/france-to-work-with-saudi-arabia-to-resolve-lebanon-crisis/>

### **Hezbollah military expert killed in Marib, Yemen**

Ya Libnan, December 10, 2021

A Hezbollah military leader fighting for the Iran-backed Houthis has been killed in clashes with government forces in the central province of Marib, Yemen's information minister revealed on Thursday. In a tweet, Moammar Al-Eryani said that expert adviser Akram Al-Sayed died when Yemeni army troops shelled Houthi positions south of Marib, inflicting a blow to a Houthi militia push to seize control of Marib city. The Houthis are being supported by thousands of fighters, including many from Iran, Lebanon, and Iraq. Al-Eryani called on the international community and UN Security Council permanent members, "to condemn this blatant interference, which undermines de-escalation efforts in Yemen, continues bloodshed, and exacerbates humanitarian suffering of Yemenis." The minister urged an intensification of sanctions against Lebanese Hezbollah and demanded that the government in Lebanon curb the influx of Hezbollah fighters to Yemen.

<https://yalibnan.com/2021/12/10/hezbollah-military-expert-killed-in-marib-yemen/>

### **Several people injured in explosion at south Lebanon Palestinian camp**

Ya Libnan, December 11, 2021

A large explosion rocked a Palestinian camp in the southern Lebanese port city of Tyre on Friday night, injuring about a

dozen people, according to rescue workers on scene and a Palestinian source inside the camp. The state-run National News Agency (NNA) reported an unspecified number of deaths, but local media and civil defense workers on scene said there had been no fatalities. A security source also said fatalities had not been recorded. The NNA reported that the blast emanated from a Hamas weapons depot in the Burj al-Shemali camp and a judge had ordered security forces to launch an investigation. A number of armed Palestinian factions, including Hamas and the Fatah Movement, hold effective control over roughly a dozen Palestinian camps in the country, which Lebanese authorities by custom do not enter.

<https://yalibnan.com/2021/12/11/several-people-injured-in-explosion-at-south-lebanon-palestinian-camp/>

#### **4 Palestinians killed in Hamas, Fatah camp shooting during funeral**

Ya Libnan, December 12, 2021

Four people were killed and others were injured in a shooting on Sunday in the Palestinian camp of Burj al-Shemali in Lebanon, two officials of the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas told Reuters, and they blamed rival movement Fatah for the bloodshed. The shootings took place during the funeral of a Hamas supporter who was killed in an explosion on Friday night in the camp in the southern Lebanese port city of Tyre. "Fatah gunmen deliberately opened fire against people taking part in the funeral march," one Hamas official said, asking not to be named. There was no immediate response from the office of the Palestinian ambassador in Lebanon to a Reuters request for comment about the Hamas allegation.

<https://yalibnan.com/2021/12/12/4-palestinians-killed-in-hamas-fatah-camp-shooting-during-funeral/>

## **QATAR**

### **Qatar to join energy exploration in Eastern Mediterranean**

Middle East Monitor, December 8, 2021

Qatari oil and gas company, Qatar Energy, becomes the first energy company from the Gulf region which has been awarded the rights to explore oil and gas in Cyprus' offshore in the Eastern Mediterranean, *Reuters* reports. According to the report, Cyprus' Energy Ministry said Qatar Energy will do exploration activities in 40 per cent, while American company, Exxon Mobil, is taking 60 per cent of the block. The award was made after winning the approval of the Cypriot cabinet, the report says. Block 5 lies adjacent to block 10, which Exxon Mobil and Qatar Energy also hold the exploration rights for. By this act, Qatar became the first Gulf nation which starts drilling activities in the Cyprus part of the Eastern Mediterranean, the report states.

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/2021/12/08/qatar-to-join-energy-exploration-in-eastern-mediterranean/>

## **SAUDI ARABIA**

### **Arab Coalition destroys Houthi explosive-laden boat**

Alarabiya News, December 1, 2021

The Arab Coalition backing the legitimate government in Yemen has destroyed an explosive-laden boat used by the Iran-backed Houthi militia in the south of the Red Sea on Wednesday, according to the Saudi state TV. The explosive-laden boat was launched from Yemen's Hodeidah, it added.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2021/12/01/Arab-Coalition-destroys-Houthi-explosive-laden-boat>



### **More than 90 Houthis killed in last 24 hours in Yemen's Marib: Arab Coalition**

Alarabiya News, December 3, 2021

The Arab Coalition on Friday said its forces launched 13 military operations against the Iran-backed Houthi militia in Yemen's Marib, killing more than 90 members of the militia. The coalition added that the operations destroyed eight military equipment. On Thursday, the coalition revealed that an airstrike launched by its forces against a military target for the Houthis in Sanaa hit a site of qualitative weapons that were transported from Sanaa International Airport.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2021/12/03/More-than-90-Houthis-killed-in-last-24-hours-in-Yemen-s-Marib-Arab-Coalition>

### **Arab Coalition destroys 14 vehicles, kills more than 115 Houthis**

Alarabiya News, December 5, 2021

The Arab Coalition announced it has destroyed four drones launched by the Iran-backed Houthi militia targeting the southern region, adding that it had also conducted 19 targeted strikes on Marib and al-Jawf during the past 24 hours. During the recent operations, 14 military vehicles were also destroyed alongside the killing of more than 115 Houthi militants, pointing out that the launch of the drones coincided with the launch of four ballistic missiles towards Marib. On Sunday, the Houthi militia renewed its attacks on the Yemeni governorate of Marib by firing several missiles.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2021/12/05/Arab-Coalition-destroys-14-vehicles-kills-more-than-115-Houthis-during-recent-operat>

### **Arab Coalition strikes in Marib kill 280 Houthis during past 24 hours**

Alarabiya News, December 6, 2021

The Arab Coalition has carried out its largest targeting of Houthi militants in Marib during the past 24 hours, killing 280 members of the Iran-backed militia group during 47 operations, according to a statement. During the operation, 34 Houthi military vehicles were also targeted as well as ammunition storage sites. Military sources in the al-Alam front, north of Marib, confirmed to Al Arabiya's correspondent on the ground that the army and the Popular Resistance forces managed to seize five fighters belonging to the Houthi militia.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2021/12/06/Arab-Coalition-strikes-in-Marib-kill-280-Houthis-during-past-24-hours>

### **US voices support to Saudi Arabia after Houthis' terrorist attack**

Saudi Gazette, December 7, 2021

The United States on Monday renewed backing Saudi Arabia against the repeated Houthi attacks on its cities. "We have made very clear that we stand with our Saudi partners who have, for quite some time, endured terrorist attacks by the Houthis in Yemen," Department of State Spokesperson Ned Price told reporters. He cautioned that Houthi actions are undermining international efforts to find a diplomatic solution to the conflict. "The Houthis have demonstrated through their actions on the ground, including their offensive against Marib through their continuing attacks against Saudi Arabia, including attacks that have the potential to inflict grievous harm on civilians in Saudi Arabia that -- at the current moment, they

are the obstacle to diplomacy. They are the obstacle to finding a resolution to this conflict," he said

<https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/614405/SAUDI-ARABIA/US-voices-support-to-Saudi-Arabia-after-Houthis-terrorist-attack>

### **Saudi Arabia seeks support as Yemen war heats up again**

Al-Monitor, December 7, 2021

Saudi Arabia is pressing allies to supply additional missiles for its US-made Patriot air defense systems as its conflict with Yemen's Houthi rebels once again intensifies. Riyadh has asked both the United States and the European Union to provide additional munitions for its Patriot systems, The Wall Street Journal reported today. The request comes as missile and drone attacks from Yemen into Saudi Arabia have spiked in recent months, with more than 20 drone strikes and 10 ballistic missile strikes landing in both October and November of this year, according to the report, which cited a Saudi government official.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/12/saudi-arabia-seeks-support-yemen-war-heats-up-again#ixzz7FIJNkp6d>

### **US Senate votes to allow military sale to Saudi Arabia**

Daily Sabah, December 8, 2021

The United States Senate rejected a resolution that would have prohibited the Biden administration's proposed sale of advanced weapons including missile launchers to Saudi Arabia. The resolution, which was rejected in a 67-30 vote, would have blocked the \$650 million sale of medium range air-to-air missiles and related equipment to the kingdom. The majority of Republican senators backed the

proposed sale. It was introduced by Republicans Rand Paul and Mike Lee as well as Democrat Bernie Sanders. In a statement of administration policy, the White House voiced strong opposition against the resolution, saying the proposed sale would replenish Saudi Arabia's existing inventory of air-to-air missiles. "These missiles are not used to engage ground targets; Saudi Arabia uses these munitions to defend against aerial cross-border attacks, such as Houthi explosive-laden drones," said the statement.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/world/americas/us-senate-votes-to-allow-military-sale-to-saudi-arabia>

### **Yemen measure stripped from US defense bill as Saudis up bombing**

Al-Monitor, December 8, 2021

US lawmakers have removed a measure from the annual defense spending bill that would bar the Biden administration from supporting Saudi-led coalition warplanes involved in bombing Yemen. The amendment was introduced by Rep. Ro Khanna (D-CA) and co-sponsored by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT). It passed the House in September with the support of the chair of the armed services panel, Rep. Adam Smith (D-WA) and intelligence committee chair Adam Schiff (D-CA). The measure would also have barred the US from sharing intelligence with the Saudi-led coalition to assist offensive airstrikes in Yemen. It would also have made it illegal for members of the US military to "command, coordinate, participate in the movement of, or accompany" Saudi and Emirati forces in their fight against Houthi rebels in Yemen.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/12/yemen-measure-stripped-us-defense-bill-saudis-bombing#ixzz7FIJqZjlv>

### **‘Hostile air target’ fired toward Western Saudi Arabia intercepted and destroyed**

Saudi Gazette, December 8, 2021

Saudi Air Defense Forces intercepted on Wednesday morning “a hostile air target” fired toward the Kingdom’s Western Region, the official spokesman for the Ministry of Defense said. The Ministry of Defense adopts all necessary measures to safeguard the security and integrity of the Kingdom and its national capabilities and protect civilians and civilian objects, Brig. Gen. Turki Al-Malki said. “The Ministry of Defense will undertake decisive and deterrent measures to stop these cross-border hostile acts,” he said.

<https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/614464/SAUDI-ARABIA/Hostile-air-target-fired-toward-Western-Saudi-Arabia-intercepted-and-destroyed>

### **Saudis seek ‘serious’ approach to Iran nuclear program, suggest joining negotiations**

The Times of Israel, December 15, 2021

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on Tuesday called for an “effective and serious” approach to Iran’s ballistic and nuclear program, during a Gulf summit in Riyadh. The de facto ruler was representing his country at the Gulf Cooperation Council meeting, which brought together Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar. “It is important to have an effective and serious approach to Iran’s nuclear and ballistic program,” the crown prince told the summit.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/saudis-seek-serious-approach-to-iran-nuclear-program-suggest-joining-negotiations/>

## **SYRIA**

### **Syria appreciates India’s support for Syria**

Syrian Arab News Agency, December 2, 2021

Speaker of the People’s Assembly, Hammoudah Sabbagh, described as “deep-rooted” the Syrian-Indian relations, affirming the importance of enhancing parliamentary relations between Syria and India to serve the interests of the two friendly countries and peoples. Sabbagh, meeting the Indian Ambassador in Damascus, Mahender Singh Kanyal, hailed India’s stance in support of Syria in the war against terrorism and at international forums, referring to the Syrian people’s suffering because of the terrorist crimes unilateral coercive economic measures imposed on the country.

<http://www.sana.sy/en/?p=256452>

### **Moscow condemns US hostile campaign against Syria and Russia at OPCW**

Syrian Arab News Agency, December 3, 2021

Permanent Representative of Russia to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Alexander Shulgin, condemned the US and allies’ acts to stir up hostile hysteria against Syria and Russia at the organization. “The 26th session of the organization showed the depth of divisions as the US and its allies continue to stir up hostile hysteria against Syria and Russia while many member countries became fed up with these discussions raised by Washington and its allies , “ Novosti news agency quoted Shulgin as saying in press statements on Friday.

<http://www.sana.sy/en/?p=256570>

### **CENTCOM investigating latest Syria drone strike for civilian harm**

Al-Monitor, December 6, 2021

US Central Command (CENTCOM) initiated an investigation into a drone strike near Syria's Idlib province last week that reportedly wounded six bystanders, including children. The strike, carried out with a US military MQ-9 Reaper drone, targeted a senior Huras al-Din figure in northwest Syria, Pentagon spokesperson John Kirby told reporters on Monday. Huras al-Din is an offshoot of al-Qaeda in Syria. Kirby identified the target by name as Mus'ab Qinan. CENTCOM said in a statement on Friday that it had initial indications that civilians may have been harmed in the strike.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/12/centcom-investigating-latest-syria-drone-strike-civilian-harm#ixzz7Flo8y2YQ>

### **CSTO affirms rejection of exploiting OPCW to spread allegations on using chemical weapons in Syria**

Syrian Arab News Agency, December 8, 2021

The member states of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) have affirmed their rejection of politicizing the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and using it as a platform to spread allegations of the use of these weapons in Syria. A joint statement issued by the member states of the organization said that the work of the OPCW special missions in Syria, formed in agreement with its government, must comply with the letter and spirit of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of

Chemical Weapons, stressing that any deviation from these requirements is never acceptable.

<http://www.sana.sy/en/?p=257010>

### **Syria calls for eliminating weapons of mass destruction as they pose threat to world peace and security**

Syrian Arab News Agency, December 8, 2021

Permanent Representative of Syria to the United Nations, Bassam Sabbagh, said that Syria reiterates importance of eliminating all the chemical weapons in the Middle East as they pose threat to the international and regional security and stability. Sabbagh added in a Security council session that Syria condemns the use of chemical weapons by any one, anywhere, and under any circumstance. He affirmed that Syria will continue its cooperation with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and regrets attempts by some sides to distort the image of this cooperation.

<http://www.sana.sy/en/?p=257103>

### **Pentagon: Four Islamic State fighters killed in nighttime Syria raid**

Al-Monitor, December 13, 2021

The Pentagon on Monday said four "armed Daesh (Islamic State [IS]) fighters" were killed in an overnight raid carried out in Syria's eastern Deir ez-Zor province. "Last night, there were two operations conducted in al-Busayrah, Syria. One was a partnered operation with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), and the other was a unilateral SDF operation," Pentagon spokesperson Cmdr. Jessica McNulty told Al-Monitor via email. "The partnered operation resulted in no detentions and the death of four armed Daesh fighters, one of whom was wearing a

suicide vest,” McNulty wrote, adding that the vest was destroyed by coalition forces.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/12/pentagon-four-islamic-state-fighters-killed-nighttime-syria-raid#ixzz7Flob8IOU>

## TURKEY

### ‘Turkish defense industry exported 228 products to 170 countries’

Daily Sabah, December 4, 2021

The Turkish defense industry has exported 228 products to 170 countries in several geographies within the past ten years, Presidency of Defense Industries (SSB) Chairperson Ismail Demir said on Saturday. “When we look at the point our defense industry has reached in the last 20 years, as Turkey has made progress in every field, the numbers show this fact much better,” Demir said at the Global Strategies in Defense and Aerospace Industry Conference in the Antalya province. “While only 62 defense projects were carried out nearly 20 years ago, today this number has exceeded 750. About half of these projects have been launched in the last 5 years.”

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkish-defense-industry-exported-228-products-to-170-countries>

### Iraq may become 2nd neighbor to buy Turkish combat drones

Daily Sabah, December 9, 2021

Ongoing developments show that Iraq may be a second neighboring country after Azerbaijan to receive unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UCAVs) from Turkey. Already attracting high demand, the made-in-Turkey drones were sold to several countries recently, with one export deal coming after another, especially for the Bayraktar TB2 UCAVs made by Baykar.

However, such a deal with Iraq would have different outcomes and could possibly have other military and political connotations, according to a report by TRT Haber on Thursday. The report cited claims by international media outlets on the possible sale that said Iraq’s Cabinet allocated \$100 million for the procurement.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/iraq-may-become-2nd-neighbor-to-buy-turkish-combat-drones>

### Multicopter mini UAV by Turkish company ready for export to India

Daily Sabah, December 10, 2021

multicopter mini-UAV model developed by Ankara-based Zyrone Dynamics is ready to be exported after the company attracted international investment. According to report by Anadolu Agency (AA), Zyrone Dynamics, which offers unique UAV solutions with its advanced technologies, is preparing for the first product delivery to India. Thirty percent of the company was sold to India-based DCM Shriram Industries for \$3.5 million with the agreement made at the 15th International Defense Industry Fair in August. Zyrone Dynamics will carry out the first export of the mini multi-rotor UAV platform ZCQM before the end of the year, and will continue to deliver in batches in 2022. The company is expected to deliver nearly 100 vehicles next year.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/multicopter-mini-uav-by-turkish-company-ready-for-export-to-india>

### US approves \$9.4 billion military sale to Greece

Daily Sabah, December 11, 2021

The U.S. State Department approved the sale of four warships worth \$6.9 billion to Greece on Friday along with the existing frigate modernization transactions worth

\$2.5 billion. The Defense Security Cooperation Agency delivered the required certification, notifying Congress of the possible sale on Friday. The main part of the deal will see an estimated \$6.9 billion allocated to buy four Multi-Mission Surface Combatant (MMSC) ships and related equipment, while up to \$2.5 billion will be available to cover "a possible foreign military sale" to Greece of the MEKO class frigate modernization and related equipment, said two separate statements. The agency underlined that the acquisitions will "enhance stability and maritime security" in the Eastern Mediterranean region and contribute to the security and strategic objectives of NATO and the US.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/us-approves-94-billion-military-sale-to-greece>

### **Ukraine, Turkey to jointly produce new-gen armed drones**

Daily Sabah, December 13, 2021

Turkey's Anka medium-altitude, long-endurance (MALE) unmanned combat aerial vehicle (UCAV)-type combat drones will be built in the new Ukrainian-Turkish plant being established in the ex-Soviet country, according to several news sites.

Russia-based Izvestia newspaper reported the news, citing remarks made on Dec. 11 by Alexei Arestovich, an external adviser of the Ukrainian president's office. He was cited as saying that the combat drones will be effective against air targets, including other drones and even manned aircraft. The drones will be equipped with Ukrainian engines and Turkish avionics, Arestovich was said to have told Ukraine's Radio Svoboda.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/ukraine-turkey-to-jointly-produce-new-gen-armed-drones>

### **Greece seeks to add 15 warships to inventory in 5 years: Report**

Anadolu Agency, December 15, 2021

Greece is carrying out an ambitious rearmament program for its armed forces, with a report by local Kathimerini newspaper confirming that it seeks to add 15 warships to its inventory in the next five years. In a story on Tuesday, the daily said that as a first step, a contract for the purchase of three French FDI-type frigates will be completed soon. The government will then make a final decision of corvette purchase program, for which Dutch, Italian and French companies are competing. Meanwhile, Greek and US coast guards signed a cooperation memorandum in Athens on Tuesday, the official AMNA news agency reported. The agreement that came amid expanding US-Greek military cooperation was inked in the presence of Greek Shipping Minister Giannis Plakiotakis and US Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt. Turkey has often warned Greece against indulging in an arms race, offering instead to resolve all outstanding issues, including in the Aegean, Eastern Mediterranean, and Cyprus, through dialogue.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/greece-seeks-to-add-15-warships-to-inventory-in-5-years-report/2448217>

## **UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

### **UAE buys record 80 French Rafale jets in \$19bn arms deal**

Aljazeera, December 3, 2021

The United Arab Emirates and France have signed a \$19bn arms deal that will see the Gulf state acquire 80 Rafale fighter jets and 12 military helicopters. The largest-ever overseas sale of Rafale jets was sealed on Friday as French President Emmanuel Macron began a two-day trip to the Gulf,

during which he will also visit Qatar and Saudi Arabia. “This contract cements a strategic partnership that is stronger than ever and directly contributes to regional stability,” the French presidency said in a statement after Macron and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (MBZ) signed the deal on the sidelines of the Dubai Expo 2020. Macron’s visit comes at a time when Gulf Arab states have voiced uncertainty about the United States’s focus on the region even as they seek more weapons from their key security ally.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/12/3/uae-buys-record-80-french-fighter-jets-as-macron-starts-gulf-tour>

### **French fighter jets not a substitute for American F-35s: UAE**

Daily Sabah, December 5, 2021

The Gulf Arab state on Friday ordered 80 Rafale fighter jets made by Dassault Aviation and 12 Caracal military helicopters manufactured by Airbus Helicopters in an arms contract worth 17 billion euros (\$19.2 billion). Major Gen. Ibrahim Nasser Al Alawi, commander of the UAE Air Force and Air Defense, said in a statement on state news agency WAM late on Saturday that the Rafale jets would replace the UAE's French-built Mirage 2000 fleet. "This deal is not considered as an alternative for the forthcoming F-35 deal, it is rather a complementary deal ... as we develop our air force capabilities," Alawi said and added that the UAE had for some time been looking to replace its Mirage fleet.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/french-fighter-jets-not-a-substitute-for-american-f-35s-uae>

### **US ready to proceed with F-35 sale after UAE’s withdrawal threat**

Daily Sabah, December 15, 2021

The United States is ready to move forward with the sale of F-35 fighter jets and drones to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), its top diplomat said Wednesday, a day after Abu Dhabi told Washington it would suspend talks on the \$23 billion deal that also includes munitions. “The UAE has informed the U.S. that it will suspend discussions to acquire the F-35,” a UAE official told Reuters on Tuesday, citing “technical requirements, sovereign operational restrictions, and cost/benefit analysis” for the re-assessment. In Kuala Lumpur on Wednesday, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Washington had to conduct some reviews but was prepared to move forward with the sale. “We’ve wanted to make sure, for example, that our commitment to Israel’s qualitative military edge is assured, so we wanted to make sure that we could do a thorough review of any technologies that are sold or transferred to other partners in the region, including the UAE,” Blinken said. The UAE had signed a deal to purchase 50 F-35 stealthy jets made by Lockheed Martin, up to 18 MQ-9B drones and other advanced munitions, sources told Reuters in January.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/us-ready-to-proceed-with-f-35-sale-after-uaes-withdrawal-threat>

# NUCLEAR AND ARMS CONTROL CENTRE

*Sylloge on West Asia is compiled by Mr Kushal Agrawal  
with inputs from Mr Niranjana C Oak*

**Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses**

**No. 1, Development Enclave,  
Rao Tula Ram Marg,  
Delhi Cantt., New Delhi-110 010  
Telephone: 91-11-26717983;  
Fax: 91-11-26154191,  
Website: [www.idsa.in](http://www.idsa.in)**



**MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR  
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES**  
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