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# SYLLOGE ON WEST ASIA

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

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मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

## IRAN

### Iran nuclear chief sends letter to IAEA

Tehran Times, 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2021

Ali Akbar Salehi, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), has sent a letter to the chief of the UN nuclear watchdog informing him that a February deal between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency has expired but Iran decided to continue to store data related to monitoring activities. The letter was announced after the Agency released a quarterly report on Iran in which it accused Iran of failing to explain traces of uranium found at several allegedly undeclared sites. “Dr. Salehi's letter to @rafaelmgrossi: Whereas the Technical Understanding was expired on May 24, Iran decided not to extend it, meanwhile we decided to continue recording for one month aimed at providing another opportunity to conclude bilateral tech negotiations with the Agency,” Gharibabadi, Iran’s permanent representative to the UN offices in Vienna said on Twitter, adding, “On safeguards, Iran has so far done its utmost efforts to cooperate with the Agency substantively and provide the necessary clarifications and responses. We welcome the Agency’s readiness for engaging in a proactive and focused effort to resolve the issues without any delay.”

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/461596/Iran-nuclear-chief-sends-letter-to-IAEA>

### Iran navy's largest ship sinks after fire in Gulf of Oman

Al-Monitor, 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2021

The Iranian navy's biggest ship sank on Wednesday after catching fire in the Gulf of Oman, state news outlets reported.

The Iranian navy said in a statement that one of the Kharg’s systems caught fire off the southern Iranian port city of Jask, according to the semi-official Tasnim News Agency. The ship was en route to international waters for a “training naval operation” when the fire started in the engine room around 11 a.m. local time.

Civilian and military emergency responders spent more than 20 hours trying to extinguish the blaze before the vessel sank, the navy said.

“Despite 20 hours of all-out efforts by Civil and Naval Military Rescue Teams, the rescue operation of the Kharg training support vessel was ineffective due to the spread of fire in different parts,” Iran’s Fars news agency quoted a navy spokesperson as saying.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/iran-navys-largest-ship-sinks-after-fire-gulf-oman#ixzz6y7TTOhB3>

### Iran’s Top Negotiator: Delegations to Return to Capitals over Vienna Talks Differences

Fars News Agency, 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2021

Iran’s Deputy Foreign Minister and top negotiator Seyed Abbas Araqchi underlined the need for the G4+1 (China, Russia, Britain and France plus Germany) and Iranian delegations to return to their countries for more consultations on how to deal with the differences in the talks in Vienna. “Today we are in a situation that we should have a new conclusion of the negotiations that have taken place so far. All delegations concluded that visits should be made to the capitals for further consultations and further decision-making on differences,” Araqchi said in Vienna on Wednesday.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000312000675/Iran's-Tp-Negiar-Delegains-Rern-Capials-ver-Vienna-Talks>

### **Pentagon issues warning over Iran warship reportedly headed to Venezuela**

Al-Monitor, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2021

The Biden administration has issued a stern warning to Tehran following a news report that an Iranian navy vessel may be headed to Venezuela to deliver military hardware. "The delivery of such weapons would be a provocative act and a threat to our partners in this hemisphere," read a statement issued by the Pentagon on Wednesday night. "As such, we would reserve the right to take appropriate measures — in concert with our partners — to deter the delivery or transit of such weapons." The admonishment, perhaps the strongest directed at Iran to date by the Biden administration, came in response to a report by USNI News revealing satellite imagery that showed the Iranian navy's floating sea base, the Makran, carrying at least seven fast-attack boats onboard.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/pentagon-issues-warning-over-iran-warship-reportedly-headed-venezuela#ixzz6y7iT8i00>

### **Iran, Tajikistan Sign Security Agreement**

Fars News Agency, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2021

Iran and Tajikistan inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to further increase bilateral relations and cooperation in the security field. Iranian Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli praised the MoU, saying that agreements can expand bilateral relations in various fields. "With the negotiations that I had with Mr. Rahimzoda

in Tajikistan since March, and the visit that Mohammad Javad Zarif paid to the country (Tajikistan) after my visit, today the result of these efforts led to the signing of a cooperation document between the two countries," Rahmani Fazli said after signing the security pact.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000313000319/Iran-Tajikisan-Sign-Secriy-Agreemen>

### **Iran says refinery fire contained, rules out sabotage**

Al-Monitor, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2021

Only hours into a massive fire that ravaged the Tondguyan Oil Refinery south of the capital Tehran, one Iranian official after another dismissed speculation that it was an act of sabotage. The refinery's public relations chief told the Iranian press that based on a review of surveillance camera footage, the sabotage theory was "absolutely ruled out." A prosecutor announced that the incident was not being treated as sabotage, but an investigation had been launched into the possible causes. Based on their initial estimates, officials were expecting the fire to be out in 12 hours. Yet by mid-day June 3, plumes of smoke were still being seen outside the refinery as the fire had hit a large reservoir of 20,000 barrels of oil.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/iran-says-refinery-fire-contained-rules-out-sabotage#ixzz6y7fdlqoa>

### **Pakistan says fencing of border with Iran to be completed by end of this year**

Islamic Republic News Agency, 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Pakistani Interior Minister says fencing work on joint border with the Islamic

Republic of Iran is in full swing and would be completed by the end of 2021. Sheikh Rasheed Ahmad in a video message on Friday before traveling to the zero point of the border with Afghanistan in North and South Waziristan says the government is determined to make the borders safe and secure. He added so far, 44 percent fencing work on border with Iran has been completed while the whole border would be fenced by the end of 2021. The Pakistani interior minister said the government of Prime Minister Imran Khan is committed to strengthen border security by using electronic technology for effective border management.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84354842/Pakistan-says-fencing-of-border-with-Iran-to-be-completed-by>

### **Two Iranian warships round tip of Africa for first time, sparking US concern**

Times of Israel, 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

The US is tracking two Iranian Navy ships that have rounded the southern tip of Africa and are headed to the Atlantic Ocean, the farthest west that Iranian navy ships have gone, according to multiple reports Friday. According to reports in CNN, Politico and Fox News, US officials have been following the movements of the Makran and the Sahand for the past two weeks with some concern, and believe they may be headed for Venezuela in South America. The two regimes are allies. It is not clear what cargo the ships are carrying, though one of them has been photographed with seven small attack boats on its deck, of the kind that has often harassed US Navy boats in the Persian Gulf. Some officials believe they may be looking to deliver weapons to Caracas. Washington would likely view an Iranian move into the Atlantic as an

aggressive act that could further exacerbate tensions between the countries.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/two-iranian-warships-round-tip-of-africa-for-first-time-sparking-us-concern/>

### **Blinken: Iran's nuclear 'breakout time' a matter of weeks if violations continue**

Al-Monitor, 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Iran's so-called breakout time could drop to "a matter of weeks" if the country continues to violate its terms of the landmark nuclear deal, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Monday.

During a House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing, Blinken said it remains to be seen whether the Iranians are "willing and prepared" to resume compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The original signatories to the deal have been meeting in Vienna to reach an agreement on a revived nuclear deal, but Tehran and Washington are at odds over which of them will make the first move. In the meantime, Iran's program is "galloping forward," Blinken said, referencing Iran's increased uranium enrichment and recent use of advanced centrifuges.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/blinken-irans-nuclear-breakout-time-matter-weeks-if-violations-continue#ixzz6y7styyil>

### **IAEA board meeting convenes; Iran, JCPOA on agenda**

Islamic Republic News Agency, 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

IAEA Board of Governors began its quarterly meeting today, with Iran and the nuclear deal on agenda. The Board meeting is held on the condition that the UN nuclear watchdog has raised some claims on what it has called undeclared nuclear activities by

Iran. Iran and the IAEA reached an agreement in March, based on which Tehran would suspend the legislation to halt implementing Additional Protocol. They also agreed that Iran keeps cameras in nuclear sites alive but avoids submitting the recordings until the US sanctions on Iran are removed. The agreement expired last week, but the Iranian side gave another one-month opportunity to let the talks in Vienna move forward until an agreement is reached.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84357223/IAEA-board-meeting-convenes-Iran-JCPOA-on-agenda>

### **Iranian Engineers Overhaul Giant Electro Motors at Bushehr N. Power Plant**

Fars News Agency, 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Iranian engineers at Jemco company succeeded in overhauling the giant electro motors at the country's first nuclear power plant in Bushehr. "Two years ago, we were able to overhaul the electric motors of Be'sat power plant in Tehran and they were satisfied with the results. And this year, the issue of overhauling Bushehr nuclear power plant's electro motors was put forward," CEO of Jemco company Mohammad Rostami told FNA on Tuesday.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000318000264/Iranian-Engineers-Overhal-Gian-Elecr-Mrs-a-Bshehr-N-Pwer-Plan>

### **Tehran rejects Grossi's assessment on Iran-IAEA cooperation**

Tehran Times, 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Iran's ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has responded to the assessment of IAEA chief Rafael Grossi about the quality of cooperation between Iran and the UN body,

advising him to avoid politicizing the Iranian nuclear program. Ambassador Kazem Gharibabadi said Rafael Grossi's assessment that a lack of progress in cooperation between Iran and the IAEA seriously affects the Agency's ability to make sure that Iran's nuclear program is exclusively peaceful was not credible.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/461768/Tehran-rejects-Grossi-s-assessment-on-Iran-IAEA-cooperation>

### **Iran's Top Negotiator: 500 US Sanctions Still Remain after 5 Round of Talks**

Fars News Agency, 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Iran's top negotiator and Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araqchi said the US is still adamant to remove 500 sanctions after 5 rounds of talks between Tehran and the Group 4+1 (China, Russia, Britain and France plus Germany) in Vienna. "At the end of the fifth round of talks, the deputy foreign minister announced that out of 1,500 nuclear sanctions against Iranian bodies and individuals, 1,000 sanctions had been lifted and 500 sanctions are remaining. In addition, primary and secondary sanctions still remain in place," Ebrahim Azizi, a member of the Iranian parliament Foreign Policy Committee said.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000320000248/Iran's-Tp-Negiar-500-US-Sancins-Sill-Remain-afer-5-Rnd-f-Talks>

### **Iran's Naval Fleet Dispatched to Atlantic Ocean for First Time**

Fars News Agency, 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Iranian naval fleet, comprising Sahand destroyer and Makran ship, left Iran for the Atlantic Ocean for the first time without mooring in other countries' ports, Deputy Army Commander for Coordination Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari said. "We

consider presence in international waters as the inalienable right of the Navy of the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran and we will continue this path with authority," he went on to say. "The 77th strategic naval fleet of the Navy, comprising of Sahand destroyer and Makran ship, is present in the Atlantic Ocean for the first time to demonstrate the capabilities of Iran in the maritime arena," the commander noted.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000321000100/Iran's-Naval-Fleet-Dispatched-Atlantic-Ocean-for-First-Time>

### **Putin denies Russia will provide Iran advanced satellite system**

Tehran Times, 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Russian leader Vladimir Putin refuted on Friday a U.S. media report that Moscow is preparing to transfer to Iran an advanced satellite system that will substantially boost its surveillance capabilities. "We have plans for cooperation with Iran, including military and technical cooperation," Putin told NBC News. "It's all fake news. At the very least, I'm not familiar with this type of thing... It's all gibberish and garbage." In a report on Thursday, the Washington Post, citing current and former U.S. and West Asian officials, claimed the satellite system delivery might take place within months and is the product of several trips to Russia by Iranian officials.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/461896/Putin-denies-Russia-will-provide-Iran-advanced-satellite-system>

### **Iran's intensive talks underway in Vienna**

Islamic Republic News Agency, 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Iranian delegation's intensive talks are still underway at deputy foreign ministers level

in Vienna. Earlier, Iran's top nuclear negotiator Abbas Araghchi said that much legal, technical and political discussion is necessary and talks will be continued. The talks will continue whenever needed, he added. The signatories to the nuclear agreement resumed this round of talks on Saturday in a bid to discuss the lifting of US sanctions on Iran and Washington's potential return to the JCPOA. The sixth round of talks is chaired by Enrique Mora, the coordinator of the nuclear deal talks in Vienna.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84364921/Iran-s-intensive-talks-underway-in-Vienna>

### **Iran enriching uranium to 63%, says Rouhani**

Tehran Times, 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

President Hassan Rouhani said on Monday that Iran has mastered a level of knowledge that it is enriching uranium up to 63%, and that it can enrich uranium at any percentage it desires. Rouhani made the remarks while speaking at an inauguration ceremony unveiling the Defense Ministry plans. The president reiterated Tehran's long held position that Iran's nuclear program is purely for civilian purposes, saying production of nuclear weapons is unacceptable. "In the issue of defense in our country, we neither need weapons of mass destruction, nor we seek to acquire this weapon, nor do we consider it permissible; this is an explicit fatwa of the Supreme Leader." Rouhani said Iran is developing new technologies for domestic use. The International Atomic Energy Agency announced on May 13 that based on the samples taken from the Natanz nuclear site, Iran has enriched uranium up to 63%.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/461999/Iran-enriching-uranium-to-63-says-Rouhani>

## **Iran Launches New Destroyer, Minesweeper Warship**

Fars News Agency, 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

A new Iran-made destroyer, Dena, and a minesweeper warship, Shaheen, joined the country's naval fleet in the Southern territorial waters in Bandar Abbas on Monday. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Army Commander Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi, Navy Commander Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi and Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami participated in the ceremony to launch the two giant vessels.

"It is a very good day as the country's defense industry has made and prepared a large destroyer for operation with its own hands in a period of 8 years. This destroyer is ready to carry out its missions," President Rouhani said, addressing the ceremony via video conferencing.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000324000240/Iran-Lanches-New-Desryer-Minesweeper-Warship>

## **IRAQ**

### **Iraqi Militia Leader Qais Khazali: The Americans Will Have To Pay A Heavy Price For Their Continued Military Presence In Iraq, We Have Decided To Increase Quality, Quantity Of Operations**

MEMRI TV, 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2021

Iraqi militia leader Qais Khazali, the Secretary-General of Asai'b Ahl Al-Haq said that the Americans will discover that the price they have to pay for their continued military presence in Iraq is very heavy. He made these remarks in an interview that aired on Al-Ahd TV (Iraq) on June 1, 2021. Khazali said that the militias have decided to increase the quality and

quantity of operations against military targets, and they have increased capability and weapons. He added that according to the Washington Post, the militias have UAVs with high-precision strike capabilities, and these were used in an attack on the Ayn Al Asad air base. Khazali elaborated that the Americans were "astounded" by the fact that these UAVs were able to bypass the Patriot defense systems.

<https://www.memri.org/tv/iraqi-militia-leader-qais-khazali-americans-pay-price-continued-military-presence>

### **Erdogan threatens to strike refugee camp inside Iraq**

Al-Monitor, 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2021

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has threatened to strike a refugee settlement in Iraqi Kurdistan on the grounds that it is a breeding ground for rebels of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). In a live interview on the state-run TRT news channel, Erdogan said that if the United Nations did not "clean it up, we will do it as a UN member." Erdogan claimed that Makhmour, which lies 180 kilometers (112 miles) south of the Turkish border, posed as grave a threat as Qandil, a mountain range straddling the Iraq-Iran border where top PKK commanders are based. "How long are we supposed to be patient?" he asked. The warnings came as Turkish troops continue a large-scale offensive against the PKK along a mountainous strip of territory along Iraq's border with Turkey. The aim is to disrupt the PKK's access from Qandil to mobile bases dotting the length of the Turkish-Iraqi border all the way to northeast Syria where the PKK's Syrian franchise runs an autonomous administration under the protection of the United States.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/erdogan-threatens-strike-refugee-camp-inside-iraq#ixzz6y8AJ8gKx>

### **PM : Iraq managed to cut size of US forces by 60%**

Islamic Republic News Agency, 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi elaborated on the process of US forces expulsion from Iraq, saying: "we were able to reduce the size of American forces in Iraq to more than 60%." Regarding the strategic dialogue, during this year we have entered three stages of dialogue, and in the second stage we were able to obtain an explicit admission from the American president Trump that the Americans will pull out of Iraq, and before reaching the third stage we were able to reduce the size of American forces in Iraq to more than 60%., Al-Kadhimi told IRNA.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84355068/PM-Iraq-managed-to-cut-size-of-US-forces-by-60>

### **US air defenses shoot down drones near Iraq air base**

Al-Monitor, 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

US air defense systems shot down two drones near Ayn al-Asad air base shortly after midnight on Sunday, Iraq's military said. The encroachment, knocked down by US counter-rocket, artillery and mortar systems (C-RAM), is the latest targeting the base that houses Western military contractors and has been home to US Reaper drones used largely in operations against the Islamic State (IS). No group has claimed credit for the incident, which follows a previous drone attack on Ayn al-Asad on May 8. US and international coalition sites have increasingly come

under attack from unmanned aircraft in Iraq in recent months, a problem that has raised significant concern for US military officials.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/us-air-defenses-shoot-down-drones-near-iraq-air-base#ixzz6y8EtdjJM>

### **Iraq calls on Turkey to withdraw its troops**

Middle East Monitor, 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

The Iraqi Presidency yesterday called on Turkey to withdraw its troops from Iraq and condemned Ankara's bombing of Makhmour refugee camp in the north of the country which led to killing three people on Saturday. "We stress on the need to prevent the violation of Iraqi sovereignty, and the withdrawal of Turkish forces present in the regions of [Kurdistan] and Mosul, which is a violation of the principle of good neighbourliness, and a violation of international norms and covenants," the Iraqi presidency said in a statement, adding that "the recent attack on Makhmour camp is a dangerous escalation that endangers the lives of citizens, including refugees, and is inconsistent with international and humanitarian law."

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20210607-iraq-calls-on-turkey-to-withdraw-its-troops/>

### **Iraq plans nuclear power plants to tackle electricity shortage**

Aljazeera, 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Iraq is working on a plan to build nuclear reactors as the electricity-starved petrostate seeks to end the widespread blackouts that have sparked social unrest. Iraq seeks to build eight reactors capable of producing about 11 gigawatts, said Kamal Hussain

Latif, chairman of the Iraqi Radioactive Sources Regulatory Authority. It would seek funding from prospective partners for the \$40 billion plan and pay back the costs over 20 years, he said, adding that the authority had discussed cooperation with Russian and South Korean officials. “We have several forecasts that show that without nuclear power by 2030, we will be in big trouble,” Latif said in an interview at his office in Baghdad.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2021/6/8/iraq-plans-nuclear-power-plants-to-tackle-electricity-shortage>

### **Rockets hit near US troops, contractors in Iraq**

Aljazeera, 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Multiple rockets have targeted two Iraqi military bases hosting US-led coalition troops and foreign contractors but nobody was hurt in the attacks. Iraq’s joint operations command said in a statement on Thursday one attack near a military base next to Baghdad’s airport was spearheaded by three explosives-laden drones, and one of the UAVs was intercepted and destroyed. Three rockets also hit Balad airbase, north of the capital, on Wednesday without causing any casualties or damage, a military statement said. The base houses foreign military contractors. Attacks on Iraqi bases, especially those hosting US troops and contractors, have increased since the US assassination of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani in Baghdad in January 2020.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/10/rockets-hit-near-us-troops-contractors-in-iraqi-army-bases>

### **KRG puts PKK on notice for killing of peshmerga forces**

Al-Monitor, 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

In response to the killing of its members at the hands of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), the Ministry of Peshmerga in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) said in a statement it is always the people who pay the price. The KRG accused the PKK of causing multiple losses to the region due to such operations. The ministry stressed it will allow neither Kurdistan nor its people to fall prey to the PKK’s erroneous policy. The Biden administration condemned the PKK attack on the peshmerga forces and described it as “brutal” at a time when the Iraqi government vowed a just punishment is in store for whoever sheds Iraqi blood.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/krg-puts-pkk-notice-killing-peshmerga-forces#ixzz6y8FaM2B8>

### **ISRAEL**

#### **Suspected balloon-borne bombs from Gaza land in south for first time in months**

Times of Israel, 4<sup>th</sup> May, 2021

Two balloons carrying suspected explosive devices that were apparently launched from the Gaza Strip landed in southern Israel on Monday, local authorities said in the first such attacks in months. According to the Sha’ar Hanegev regional council, the suspected bombs were found in agricultural fields in the community of Kfar Aza, east of Gaza City. Residents of the area reported seeing additional balloons overhead throughout the afternoon. It was not immediately clear where they landed.

Police sappers were called to remove the suspected explosives from Kfar Aza.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/suspected-balloon-borne-bombs-from-gaza-land-in-south-for-first-time-in-months/>

### **Hamas threatens to renew fighting if Qatari funds don't enter Gaza next week**

Times of Israel, 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

If Israel does not allow the passage of Qatari funds to the Gaza Strip, Hamas will escalate the situation on the border with Israel, sources in the terror group told Lebanese media on Friday.

With Israel's approval, Qatar has in recent years distributed hundreds of millions of dollars in cash to enable Gaza's Hamas rulers to pay for fuel for the Strip's power plant, pay civil servants, and provide aid to tens of thousands of impoverished families. Hamas sources told the Lebanese Al Akhbar newspaper that the organization would wait until the end of next week for the money to enter, "and if this does not happen it will take an important decision regarding the mutual ceasefire" that took effect two weeks ago, after 11 days of fighting with Israel.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-threatens-to-renew-fighting-if-qatari-funds-dont-enter-gaza-next-week/>

### **In first, Israeli F-35s train in Italy — with Iran in their sights**

Times of Israel, 6<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Six Israeli F-35 stealth fighters landed in Italy last week to take part in a two-week air exercise in Italy with its air force, alongside those of the United States and United Kingdom, in the largest and farthest drill that the aircraft have taken part in to date, the military said Sunday.

Though the explicit goal of the exercise is to improve the overall capabilities of the F-35 jet, which entered military service in late 2016, a senior Israeli Air Force officer acknowledged that in part, this drill — dubbed Falcon Strike 2021 — was meant to prepare Israeli pilots for using the fighter aircraft against Iranian forces. The exercise will be held from June 6 to June 17, but will kick off in earnest on Monday.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-first-israeli-f-35s-train-in-italy-with-iran-in-their-sights/>

### **Israel reported to strike several sites across Syria**

Times of Israel, 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

An Israeli airstrike caused damage to sites in southern and central Syria late Tuesday, Damascus said, the first attack attributed to Israel in over a month. According to Syrian state news agency Sana, air defense systems managed to shoot down some Israeli missiles which were fired from the direction of Lebanon after 11:30 p.m. It said some missiles were shot down and others caused damage, citing a military source. "Our air defense array confronted the aggression's missiles and shot down some of them, and there were material losses only," the source was quoted saying. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based war monitor, reported "violent explosions felt in Damascus and around the city, followed by Israeli strikes on military positions" of the Syrian army.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/syria-claims-israeli-airstrikes-on-sites-in-south-center-of-country/>

### **11 fighters said killed in alleged Israeli strikes in Syria**

Times of Israel, 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

At least 11 people were reportedly killed overnight Wednesday in Israeli airstrikes in Syria. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights — a pro-Syrian opposition organization of uncertain funding based in the UK — the government troops and militiamen were killed in Homs Province in central Syria. The monitor's director, Rami Abdul Rahman, told AFP that "at least seven army soldiers and four National Defence Forces militiamen were killed" in the strikes shortly before midnight, adding that all of the dead were Syrian.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/8-fighters-said-killed-in-alleged-israeli-strikes-in-syria/>

## **JORDAN**

### **Israeli forces hold manoeuvres in Jordan Valley**

Middle East Monitor, 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Israeli occupation forces have launched a military exercise around Tayaseer, a village near the West Bank city of Tubas in the northern Jordan Valley, *Wafa* news agency has reported. According to the head of Tayaseer Village Council, Wajeeh Dabk, large numbers of Israeli tanks and other military vehicles have been deployed around the village for the manoeuvres. Villagers were not warned about this in advance, he insisted.

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20210614-israeli-forces-hold-manoevres-in-jordan-valley/>

## **LEBANON**

### **Hizbullah, IRGC Coordinated With Hamas During Latest Fighting; Qods Force Commander Qaani, Hamas Field Officers Came To The Joint Operations Room In Beirut**

MEMRI TV, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2021

Lebanese journalist and Hizbullah mouthpiece Ibrahim Al-Amine, editor-in-chief of the pro-Hizbullah *Al-Akhbar* newspaper, said that the Palestinian factions in Gaza closely coordinated and maintained a joint operations room with Hizbullah and the IRGC during their recent round of fighting with Israel. He made these remarks in an interview that aired on *Al-Manar TV* (Hizbullah-Lebanon) on May 28, 2021. Al-Amine went on to say that Hizbullah provided Hamas with surveillance services, transported senior Hamas officials from Gaza to Lebanon, and transported supplies to Gaza during the fighting. He further said that IRGC Qods Force commander General Qaani visited Beirut twice during the same period.

<https://www.memri.org/reports/hizbullah-mouthpiece-ibrahim-al-amine-hizbullah-irgc-coordinated-hamas-during-latest>

### **UNIFIL Head Tackles Recent Incidents in Talks with Lebanese, Israeli Officers**

Naharnet, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2021

UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander Major General Stefano Del Col on Thursday chaired a special Tripartite meeting – held in a modified format due to the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions – with senior officers from the Lebanese Army the Israeli army at a U.N. position in Ras al-Naqoura. Discussions focused on the situation along the Blue Line, air and ground violations, as well as other issues

within the scope of UNIFIL's mandate under U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701 and other relevant resolutions, a UNIFIL statement said. In view of several events along and across the Blue Line between 13 and 25 May "in violation of Resolution 1701," Del Col stressed the importance of preventing the recurrence of such incidents. Del Col was referring to protests on the Lebanese side of the border with Israel and attempted rocket attacks from Lebanon that accompanied that latest war between Israel and the Gaza-based Palestinian factions.

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/281855-unifil-head-tackles-recent-incidents-in-talks-with-lebanese-israeli-officers>

### **Report: Missile, Bomb Attack Ruled Out in Port Blast Probe**

Naharnet, 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

The investigations into the August 2020 mega-explosion at Beirut port are making progress and the indictment will be issued within a few months, informed sources said. "The probe has reached new evidence," the sources told al-Akhbar newspaper in remarks published Saturday.

"Investigative judge Tarek al-Bitar has received the report of the French investigators, who ruled out the theory that the Beirut port was targeted by a missile or an explosive device that caused the blast," the sources added. The sources also revealed that there is "serious and accurate evidence" as to how the explosion happened.

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/281881-report-missile-bomb-attack-ruled-out-in-port-blast-probe>

### **Israel Combs Security Fence with Lebanon Overnight**

Naharnet, 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Israel said its troops carried out a wide combing operation overnight on the border with Lebanon, Israeli spokesman Avichay Adraee said in a tweet Monday.

Adraee said Israeli forces carried out "extensive combing work" after "detecting traces of two suspects in the area close to the security fence" with Lebanon. However he ruled out any act of "sabotage." Adraee stated that "Israeli troops and police continue their search" operation and that "residents in neighboring (Israeli) towns have returned to normal life." The Blue Line marks Israel's withdrawal from south Lebanon in May 2000 after 22 years of occupation.

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/281902-israel-combs-security-fence-with-lebanon-overnight>

### **Ministry of Defense inks two mine action agreements with UNDP, Dutch embassy**

National News Agency (Lebanon), 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Lebanon's Ministry of National Defense on Monday inked two mine action agreements with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the Dutch Embassy in Lebanon. The agreement with the UNDP addresses the humanitarian and development impacts of mines, cluster munitions, and explosive remnants of war, as well as empowers the Lebanese Mine Action Center (LMAC).

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/128485/Ministry-of-Defense-inks-two-mine-action-agreements-with-UNDP-Dutch-embassy>

### **Iran Cleric who Founded Hizbullah, Survived Book Bomb, Dies**

Naharnet, 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Ali Akbar Mohtashamipour, a Shiite cleric who as Iran's ambassador to Syria helped found Hizbullah and lost his right hand to a book bombing reportedly carried out by Israel, died Monday of the coronavirus. He was 74. A close ally of Iran's late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Mohtashamipour in the 1970s formed alliances with Muslim militant groups across the Mideast. After the Islamic Revolution, he helped found the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard in Iran and as ambassador to Syria brought the force into the region to help form Hizbullah.

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/281913-iran-cleric-who-founded-hizbullah-survived-book-bomb-dies>

### **Nasrallah Urges No 'Despair' on Govt., Threatens to Bring Iranian Fuel Ships to Beirut Port**

Naharnet, 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Hizbullah chief Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah on Tuesday said the cabinet formation initiative led by Speaker Nabih Berri should have no deadline as he threatened to “bring Iranian fuel ships to Beirut port” if the Lebanese state does not resolve the fuel shortage crisis. “We are against early parliamentary polls, because it would be a waste of time and it would deviate people’s attention from their concerns. Instead of talking about early polls, let them form a government,” Nasrallah said, in a televised address marking the anniversary of Hizbullah’s al-Manar TV. “We are with continuing the government formation efforts and there should be no despair. Let

those forming the government feel the people’s pain,” Nasrallah added.

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/281949-nasrallah-urges-no-despair-on-govt-threatens-to-bring-iranian-fuel-ships-to-beirut-port>

### **Israel Stages Attacks on Syria over Lebanon**

Naharnet, 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Syrian state media reported late Tuesday an Israeli aerial attack near the Syrian capital of Damascus and in the central province of Homs, prompting a response from national air defenses. The Syrian state news agency said the Israeli attacks came over Lebanon. Lebanon's National News Agency reported that Israeli warplanes were heard hovering at a low altitude late on Tuesday over the Keserwan district. The target of the reported Israeli attacks were not immediately clear. The attacks are the first reported since the re-election of Syrian President Bashar Assad for a fourth seven-year term.

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/281956-israel-stages-attacks-on-syria-over-lebanon>

## **OMAN**

### **Oman's RAF participates in joint exercise with Saudi Arabia**

Times of Oman, 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

A statement issued online by Oman News Agency (ONA) said, "The Royal Air Force of Oman is participating in the joint exercise (Tuwaiq 2), which is being implemented at Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia, with the participation of a number of armed forces from brotherly countries, and with the aim of strengthening existing cooperation between countries, gaining and exchanging experiences among

the participants in the field of tactical projection."

<https://timesofoman.com/article/102493-omans-raf-participates-in-joint-exercise-with-saudi-arabia>

### **Royal Air Force of Oman starts air exercise activities**

Times of Oman, 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

The air exercise activities (Al Hazm) of the Royal Air Force of Oman were launched on Sunday, June 13, 2021.

A statement issued online by Oman News Agency said: "The activities of the air exercise (Al Hazm) of the Royal Air Force of Oman were launched Sunday morning, with the support of the paratroopers of the Sultan of Oman in the Royal Army of Oman and the Royal Navy of Oman, and with the participation of members of the Sultan's Special Force."

<https://timesofoman.com/article/102611-royal-air-force-of-oman-starts-air-exercise-activities-1>

## **PALESTINE**

### **Al-Jazeera Report On Hamas Al-Qassam Brigades' Anti-Tank Unit Claims Unit Is Prepared For An Israeli Ground Invasion, Shows Kornet Missile Simulator**

MEMRI TV, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2021

Al-Jazeera Network (Qatar) aired a report on Hamas' anti-tank unit on May 31, 2021. Al-Jazeera's reporter met with an Al-Qas'am Brigades anti-tank unit inside a Hamas military tunnel. Unit members showed the Al-Jazeera correspondent the spot where they launched an attack on an IDF armored bus in the Zikim military base on May 20, 2020. A member of the unit said that he and another "mujahid" spent five

days monitoring movements within the position and reciting Quran, and that when they spotted a bus full of soldiers they fired a Kornet missile. According to IDF sources, the bus in question was empty and there were no Israeli casualties in the incident. Members of the anti-tank unit also told Al-Jazeera that they were responsible for another Kornet attack against an IDF vehicle in Netiv HaAsara, in which an IDF soldier was killed and others wounded. The unit members said that now they have qualified shooters, and that "occupation forces" must take them into serious consideration. They added that IDF soldiers now hide in trenches and forests, in fear of Hamas' anti-tank units.

<https://www.memri.org/reports/al-jazeera-report-hamas-al-qassam-brigades-anti-tank-unit-claims-unit-prepared-israeli>

### **Tunnels Suffered Only Limited Damage, Are Operational And Constitute A Strategic Weapon For Future War With Israel**

MEMRI TV, 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Al-Jazeera Network (Qatar) aired a report on Hamas's complex of underground combat tunnels on June 5, 2021. According to the report, only limited damage was done to the tunnel complex, and whatever damage was sustained has been repaired. Jihad, a member of the Al-Qassam Brigades said that the tunnels are used for communication and to store ammunition, and rocket launchpads. Al-Jazeera's correspondent said that the tunnels were used in Hamas operations to abduct IDF soldiers and that Hamas considers the tunnels a "strategic weapon" to be used in future wars with Israel.

<https://www.memri.org/tv/jazeera-report-hamas-tunnels-gaza-limited-damage-operational-strategic-weapon-war-israel>

## QATAR

### Al Jazeera cyberattacked ahead of show on Palestinian 'resistance'

Al-Monitor, 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Al Jazeera said it was hit by a series of cyberattacks this week, many of which came ahead of a program about Israeli soldiers captured by Hamas. The Qatari outlet was the target of several hacking attempts aimed at “accessing, disrupting, and controlling” some of its platforms. The cyberattacks occurred between June 5 and 8 and were thwarted, Al Jazeera Media Network said in a Wednesday statement. Many of the cyberattacks occurred on Sunday ahead of a screening of Al Jazeera Arabic’s documentary series “What is Hidden is Greater.” The episode, called “In the Grip of the Resistance,” was on Gaza-based Palestinian groups’ armed conflict with Israel. Specifically, it was about Israeli soldiers in Hamas captivity and included an interview with Hamas military leader Marwan Issa.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/al-jazeera-cyberattacked-ahead-show-palestinian-resistance#ixzz6yA7PDzdS>

### NATO looks to Qatar for base to train Afghan forces

Al-Monitor, 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Officials under NATO’s authority are seeking Qatar’s permission to use a military base to train Afghan special forces following the US and NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan, Reuters reported. “We are holding talks to earmark a base in Qatar to create an exclusive training ground for senior members of the Afghan forces,” a senior Western security official in Kabul told Reuters. “We have made an

offer but it is for authorities in Qatar to decide if they are comfortable with NATO using their territory as a training ground,” a second source based in Washington reportedly said. Reuters did not specify which site was requested, if any. The United States maintains more than 10,000 troops at the Al-Udeid Air Base in Qatar.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/nato-looks-qatar-base-train-afghan-forces#ixzz6yA6dn0PW>

## SAUDI ARABIA

### Royal Saudi Naval Forces, US Marines conclude joint exercise maneuvers

Saudi Gazette, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2021

The Royal Saudi Naval Forces (RSNF) and the US Marines have concluded a mixed military exercise (exchange of shooting experts) at King Faisal Naval Base in Jeddah, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported on Wednesday. “This exercise comes within the framework of enhancing joint military cooperation, exchanging experiences between the two naval forces, and developing their capabilities in the field of maritime security operations in the region,” the SPA added.

<https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/607349/SAUDI-ARABIA/Royal-Saudi-Naval-Forces-US-Marines-conclude-joint-exercise-maneuvers>

### US Defense Secretary, Saudi Crown Prince discuss regional security, Yemen war

Alarabiya, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2021

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin spoke with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on Wednesday and emphasized US commitment to helping Saudi Arabia

defend its territory and people, the Pentagon said. Austin and Prince Mohammed discussed regional security, particularly efforts to end the war in Yemen, and “ongoing bilateral efforts to improve Saudi Arabia’s defenses,” Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said in a statement.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2021/06/03/US-Defense-Secretary-Saudi-Crown-Prince-discuss-regional-security-Yemen-war>

### **Saudi, Greek air forces conclude 2-week joint drills in Tabuk**

Saudi Gazette, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2021

The Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF) and the Hellenic Air Force completed joint exercises at the King Faisal Air Base in Tabuk on Thursday, the Saudi Press Agency reported. The two-week-long exercises called Falcon Eye 2 saw the participation of fighter jets and crews from the Saudi air force and its Greek counterpart. The joint air drills aimed to strengthen bilateral collaboration between Greece and Saudi Arabia, as well as maximize military training and improve participants’ combat capabilities and interoperability. Saudi F-15C and Greek F-16 fighter jets participating in the exercise completed successful intense sorties, which included tactical counter operations, both offensive and defensive, air support operations, and air maneuvers.

<https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/607375/SAUDI-ARABIA/Saudi-Greek-air-forces-conclude-2-week-joint-drillsin-Tabuk>

### **Iran-backed Houthis fire missile into Marib, killing 17 including 5-year-old girl**

Alarabiya, 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Iran-backed Houthis fired a ballistic missile Saturday on a government-held city, killing at least 17 people, including a 5-year-old girl, an official said. The missile hit a gas station in the Rawdha neighborhood in Marib, according to Ali al-Ghulisi, the Marib governor’s press secretary. He said dozens of people were wounded in the attack. There was no immediate comment from the Houthis. Meanwhile, Omani officials, accompanied by senior Houthi figures, arrived Saturday in Sanaa to try to convince the Houthi militia who control the capital to accept a ceasefire, Houthi sources said.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2021/06/05/Yemen-official-says-Iran-backed-Houthis-fire-missile-killing-14>

### **Saudi hosts joint air drills with other Arab states**

Middle East Monitor, 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Saudi Arabia is hosting a joint air exercise with several Arab states at the Prince Sultan Air Base, according to an announcement yesterday by the Ministry of Defence. The two-week exercise named Tuwaiq 2 launched in the central governorate of Al-Kharj "aims to ensure the highest levels of readiness, and achieve operation compatibility and integration", the ministry stated. Among the countries participating are the UAE, Oman, Jordan, and Egypt, while Kuwait and Bahrain are taking part as observers.

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20210607-saudi-hosts-joint-air-drills-with-other-arab-states/>

### **Saudi, US ground forces launch joint military exercise**

Saudi Gazette, 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

The Royal Saudi Land Forces (RSLF) and the US Army Ground Forces (AGF) have launched a joint exercise in the northwestern region of the Kingdom, the Saudi Press Agency reported on Tuesday. The exercise dubbed “Falcon Claws 4” aims to strengthen military relations between the two countries, unify military concepts through joint action between the forces of the two sides. It also aims to facilitate the exchange of information and military experiences, improve compatibility between military equipment and doctrines, raise the level of readiness and ability to work with friendly forces, and prepare to face any external threats.

<https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/607559/SAUDI-ARABIA/Saudi-US-ground-forces-launch-joint-military-exercise>

### **Saudi air defense intercepts Houthi drone attack on Khamis Mushait**

Arab news, 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

The Arab coalition said Monday that the Saudi Arabian air defense has intercepted and destroyed an explosive-laden drone launched by the terrorist Houthis militia towards Khamis Mushait, Al Arabiya TV reported. The latest attack comes after a drone hit a school in the Asir region on Sunday, damaging the building but causing no casualties. The targeting of Khamis Mushait once again drew widespread condemnation from Gulf states, other countries and humanitarian organizations.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/1876351/saudi-arabia>

## **SYRIA**

### **Russian Defense Ministry observes 39 attacks by terrorist organizations in the de-escalation zone of Idleb**

Syrian Arab News Agency, 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

The Russian Ministry of Defense announced that terrorist organizations deployed in the de-escalation zone of Idleb carried out 39 attacks during the past 24 hours. Deputy commander of the Russian Coordination Center in Hmeimim said that 39 attacks were observed by territories where Jabhat al-Nusra terrorists are deployed, including 21 attacks in Idleb, 10 in Latakia, 4 in Hama and 4 in Aleppo.

The terrorist organizations deployed in the de-escalation zone of Idleb and a number of areas in its countryside carried out tens of attacks in recent weeks in areas in the countryside of Idleb, Aleppo, Hama and Lattakia.

<http://www.sana.sy/en/?p=236509>

### **SDF digs tunnels in northeast Syria in case of Turkish offensive**

Al-Monitor, 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) have continued to dig trenches and tunnels in the areas under its control in northeastern Syria for more than three years now, aiming to connect its military posts located along the demarcation lines with the areas held by the Turkish-backed opposition. The digging comes amid concerns over a military operation by the opposition. The tunnel network stretches from al-Darbasiyah to al-Malikiyah (Derek). A Kurdish military source who declined to be named told Al-Monitor, “The tunnels are 3 meters [10 feet] deep, with rooms built of reinforced concrete structure every kilometer [0.6 miles].”

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/sdf-digs-tunnels-northeast-syria-case-turkish-offensive#ixzz6yAz9t9D6>

### **Turkish-backed Syrian armed groups unify forces**

Al-Monitor, 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

The areas controlled by the Turkish-backed Free Syrian Army (FSA) in the countryside of Aleppo in northwest Syria have recently witnessed the merger of a number of factions under new names.

Most recently, on May 30, three military factions of the Syrian National Army (SNA) affiliated with the FSA in the countryside of Aleppo announced their merger under the name of the First Division. The factions that merged are the Ninth Division's Brigade 143, Brigade 111(Northern Brigade) and Brigade 112. A statement issued by these factions read, "In the framework of this restructuring operation within the ranks of the SNA and following the approval of the FSA's First Legion and chief of staff, we announce our complete integration under the name of the First Division operating within the ranks of the First Legion."

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/turkish-backed-syrian-armed-groups-unify-forces#ixzz6yAzSBuHQ>

### **Syria says Israeli air attacks targeted Damascus**

Aljazeera, 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Israeli air attacks struck central Syria late on Tuesday, with state news agency SANA reporting "explosions in Damascus" before adding that its air defences had been activated against the "Israeli aggression". Israeli planes arrived from Lebanese air

space, the news agency added. It did not mention any reports of casualties or damage but the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) told AFP news agency at least 11 pro-government fighters were killed in the attacks that took place late on Tuesday. "At least seven army soldiers and four National Defence Forces militiamen were killed," SOHR chief Rami Abdul Rahman said. The Britain-based war monitor said the attacks targeted air force positions near the village of Khirbet al-Tin on the outskirts of Homs, as well as an arms depot belonging to the Lebanese Hezbollah movement.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/9/israeli-strikes-kill-eight-fighters-in-syria-says-monitor>

### **Russian Defense Ministry observes 38 attacks by al-Nusra terrorists in de-escalation zone of Idlib**

Syrian Arab News Agency, 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Russian Defense Ministry announced on Saturday that terrorists of Jabhat Nusra, deployed in de-escalation zone in Idlib, carried out 38 attacks during the past

Deputy commander of the Russian Coordination Center, Rear Admiral Vadim Kulit, said that during the past 24 hours, the center recorded 38 attacks by terrorists of Jabhat al-Nusra, including 17 in Idlib province, 8 in Latakia, 4 in Aleppo, and 9 in Hama. He added that the monitoring devices observed that attacks coming from positions of terrorist organizations deployed in surroundings of Idlib.

<http://www.sana.sy/en/?p=237505>

## TURKEY

### NATO exercise Steadfast Defender 2021 wraps

Daily Sabah, 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2021

NATO's Steadfast Defender 2021 exercise with the participation of its 12 members, including Turkey, came to an end in Romania on Tuesday. The military drill was held "to ensure that our forces are trained, able to operate together and ready to respond to any threat from any direction." The Ministry of National Defense also released a statement later in the day, underlining Turkey's contributions to NATO. "It was emphasized during the video conference that Turkey continues its fight against terrorist groups such as Daesh, PKK/YPG," the statement said. The statement also said that Turkey will take charge of NATO's "Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF)" for the year 2021.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/nato-exercise-steadfast-defender-2021-wraps>

### Erdogan threatens to strike refugee camp inside Iraq

Al-Monitor, 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2021

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has threatened to strike a refugee settlement in Iraqi Kurdistan on the grounds that it is a breeding ground for rebels of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). In a live interview on the state-run TRT news channel, Erdogan said that if the United Nations did not "clean it up, we will do it as a UN member." Erdogan claimed that Makhmour, which lies 180 kilometers (112 miles) south of the Turkish border, posed as grave a threat as Qandil, a mountain range straddling the Iraq-Iran border where top

PKK commanders are based. "How long are we supposed to be patient?" he asked.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/erdogan-threatens-strike-refugee-camp-inside-iraq#ixzz6yB6TmCso>

### Turkey, Azerbaijan launch military dialogue in Baku

Daily Sabah, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2021

Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry announced Thursday that the 13th meeting of the Azerbaijan-Turkey High-Level Military Dialogue kicked off in Azerbaijan's capital Baku. The two delegations are headed by Azerbaijan's Deputy Minister of Defense Lt. Gen. Kerim Veliyev and Deputy Chief of Turkish General Staff Gen. Selcuk Bayraktaroğlu, the ministry said. The meeting's agenda is focused on bilateral cooperation in security, military, military-technical, military-medical, military-educational, defense industry, and other fields.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/turkey-azerbaijan-launch-military-dialogue-in-baku>

### Ties with Russia not an alternative to US or NATO, Ankara says

Daily Sabah, 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

The S-400 issue is over for Turkey, said the head of the Turkish Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, Akif Çağatay Kılıç, on Friday while underlining that the country's relations with Russia are not an alternative to its ties with the United States or NATO. The S-400 matter is expected to be one of the topics that will be discussed during President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and U.S. President Joe Biden's meeting this month. Addressing reporters in the capital Ankara, Kılıç commented on the issue and

said that the purchase of the defense system did not violate NATO rules. "The issue of S-400 is done for us. We took this step and this does not mean that we do not fulfill our responsibilities for NATO," he said noting that Turkey has clearly explained its stance on the issue a number of times.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/ties-with-russia-not-an-alternative-to-us-or-nato-ankara-says>

### **Column In Mouthpiece For Turkey's AKP Commemorates Late Jihadi Leader And Ideologue Abdullah 'Azzam**

MEMI TV, 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Turkish writer Taha Kılınç, in the Yeni Şafak daily, a mouthpiece of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's ruling AKP, wrote a June 2, 2021 column, titled "The Story Of Abdullah Azzam, A Palestinian Icon," commemorating the life of jihadi leader and ideologue Abdullah 'Azzam. Kılınç concluded: "It's difficult to predict where Azzam would have been dragged to and where he would stand had he lived today. However, what he accomplished during his short lifespan of 48 years has left its mark on history, and imprinted him on the agenda of today."

<https://www.memri.org/reports/column-mouthpiece-turkeys-akp-commemorates-late-jihadi-leader-and-ideologue-abdullah-azzam>

### **Turkey, US in midst of Kabul airport security talks: Pentagon**

Daily Sabah, 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Pentagon chief spokesperson John Kirby Wednesday said that Turkey and the United States held preliminary talks on the security of Kabul's Hamid Karzai International Airport after the withdrawal of American and other NATO forces from Afghanistan.

"We have ongoing discussions with Turkish leaders about their plans to provide security for the airport. Obviously, this is a decision that President (Recep Tayyip) Erdoğan should make and we respect that, but of course, we had some preliminary discussions, and as we have said in general terms before, security at the airport will be important not only for the United States but also for other nations to maintain their diplomatic presence in Kabul," he said.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/turkey-us-in-midst-of-kabul-airport-security-talks-pentagon>

### **Anti-Turkey Statements In Iran – Part IV: Iranian Regime Mouthpiece 'Kayhan' To Turkish President Erdoğan: Do Not Enter The War In Yemen Alongside Saudi Arabia**

MEMRI TV, 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Twice in recent months, the Iranian regime mouthpiece Kayhan, which is close to ideological circles, published articles warning Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan not to interfere in the war in Yemen in support of Saudi Arabia. In a March 17, 2021 article, Kayhan wrote, referring to missiles fired by the pro-Iran Shi'ite Houthi rebels in Yemen into Saudi Arabia, that if Turkey did so, "there is not a shadow of a doubt that the catastrophe caused by the long-range missiles of Ansar Allah [i.e. the Houthis] will happen to Turkey as well." It added that Erdoğan must "take into account [that there will be] a clash" with Iran's "powerful resistance axis."

<https://www.memri.org/reports/anti-turkey-statements-iran---part-iv-iranian-regime-mouthpiece-kayhan-turkish-president>

### **17 Daesh/ISIS terror suspects nabbed in Turkey**

Anadolu Agency, 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

At least 17 suspects were nabbed in an anti-terror operation against Daesh/ISIS in Turkey, a security source said Tuesday. Prosecutors in the southeastern Diyarbakir province launched an investigation into the suspects with links to the terror group, said the source on condition of anonymity due to restrictions on speaking to the media. As part of the probe, an operation was started simultaneously in four provinces -- Diyarbakir, Bursa, Mugla, and Malatya -- to nab 19 suspects after warrants were issued for them.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/17-daesh-isis-terror-suspects-nabbed-in-turkey/2274228>

## **YEMEN**

### **'Houthi missile attack' kills at least 17 in Yemen's Marib**

Aljazeera, 6<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

At least 17 people, including a five-year-old girl, have been killed after a ballistic missile targeted the Yemeni city of Marib in an attack the government blamed on the Houthi rebels. The missile hit a petrol station in the Rawdha neighbourhood, said Ali al-Ghulisi, the provincial governor's press secretary. Information Minister Moammar al-Eryani said the attack on Sunday wounded at least five others and all casualties were civilians. He said the attack amounted to a war crime. The Houthis said they had only struck a military camp. Senior Houthi official, Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, said the group welcomed an independent investigation into civilian casualties.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/6/houthi-missile-kills-at-least-17-in-yemens-marib-government>

### **Yemen's Houthis claim drone attack on Saudi airport**

Al-Monitor, 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

The Houthi rebels in Yemen claimed a drone attack on Saudi Arabia's Abha airport on Monday that the Saudi-led military coalition battling the Iran-aligned rebels has not confirmed. "The Air Force has fired a counterattack on Abha International Airport with [a] Qasef-2k drone, targeting an important military site," said Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Saree, adding, "The designated target has been hit with high precision." "This targeting comes within the framework of legitimate response to the aggression's escalation and an all-out siege on the Yemeni people," Saree said.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/yemens-houthis-claim-drone-attack-saudi-airport#ixzz6yB9Y6gSR>

### **Hamas Awards Shield Of Honor To Representative Of Houthi Movement, Sparks Rage In Saudi Arabia**

MEMI TV, 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

On June 6, 2021, Hamas' representative in Yemen, Mo'az Abu Shamala, met with Muhammad 'Ali Al-Houthi, a member of the Houthi Supreme Political Council. At the meeting, attended also by two other members of the Hamas office in Yemen -- office head 'Omar Al-Subakhi and political affairs director 'Abdallah Hadi -- Abu Shamala presented Al-Houthi with a shield of honor on behalf of Hamas, in appreciation for the Houthi's support of the Palestinian cause. Abu Shamala also

conveyed greetings from Hamas political bureau head Isma'il Haniya to the Houthis and their leader, 'Abd Al-Malik Al-Houthi, and expressed the Hamas movement's gratitude "for the efforts, initiatives, and activities announced by the Houthis in support of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian cause."

<https://www.memri.org/reports/hamas-awards-shield-honor-representative-houthi-movement-sparks-rage-saudi-arabia>