

THE EARLY PHOENIX

A first look at today's most notable stories from the Middle East, selected by ACLS experts

12 DECEMBER 2022

GULF AND YEMEN

1. [Saudi Foreign Minister: If Iran Obtains a Nuclear Weapon, the Countries of the Region will Seek to Ensure Their Own Security \(Al Sharq Al Awsat\)](#). Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan said that Iran's acquisition of a nuclear weapon will lead to the efforts of the countries of the region to ensure their [own] security, and that the failure of the nuclear agreement with Iran will enter the region into a very dangerous stage.
2. [UAE and Israel Ratify Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement \(Al Arabiya\)](#). The agreement "will cancel or reduce fees on 96% of products, which will provide a strong boost to the Emirati industrial and service sectors."
3. [Yemeni Security Seizes Large Hashish Shipment from Iran \(Al Arabiya\)](#). The drugs that were found are believed to have come from a smuggling ship that sank at sea.

IRAN

4. [One Million Sign Petition To Expel Iranian Envoys From G7 Countries \(Iran International\)](#). Nearly one million people have so far signed a petition to expel Iran's ambassadors from the G7 countries in protest to the heavy crackdown on demonstrators.
5. [Lawdan Barzargan: Iran On Verge Of 'Renaissance' And Its Women Need Support \(Iran International\)](#). November was a good month for democracy-seeking Iranians who have been on the streets since September, chanting "Woman, Life, Liberty," and "Death to Dictator."

SYRIA

6. [Coalition Conducts Raid Against ISIS Suspects East of Deir Ezzor \(Nedaa Post\)](#). Last night the International Coalition forces carried out a helicopter-borne operation targeting a number of people in the countryside of Deir Ezzor, on charges of belonging to ISIS.

7. [Suwayda Protesters Call for a General Strike in Syria \(video\)](#) (*Syria TV*). Protests returned to As-Suwayda Governorate on Sunday a week after similar popular protests in which hundreds of people demonstrated against poor living conditions.

TURKEY

8. [Erdogan to Putin: Clearing the Syrian Border of Terrorists to a Depth of 30 km is a Priority](#) (*Anadolu Agency*). Erdogan told his Russian counterpart of the necessity and priority of purging the Syrian border with Turkey from [PKK] terrorists, to a depth of at least 30 km, in the first phase, according to the Sochi agreement concluded in 2019.
9. [Turkey Announces the Killing of a PKK Leader in Northern Syria](#) (*Syria TV*). The Turkish Defense ministry said in a statement that Turkish forces managed to kill the Fahmi Muhammad, an official of the "Afrin Liberation Forces" affiliated with the PKK organization.

LEBANON

10. [Saudi Crown Prince Meets Lebanese PM Mikati 'at Macron's request'](#) (*Nahar Net*). Caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati has met with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Riyadh following "a request from French President Emmanuel Macron," LBCI TV reported overnight.

IRAQ

11. [Iraqi Government Recovers More of the Money Stolen in Iraq's "Theft of the Century"](#) (*Al Jazeera*). The office of Iraqi Prime Minister Sudani announced the Iraqi government had recovered an additional \$92 million of the billions stolen by Iraqi government officials in what Iraqis call the "theft of the century."
12. [Iraq's Parliament Speaker Confirms Killing Of Thousands By Iran-Backed Militia](#) (*Iran International*). Iraq's parliament speaker has recently confirmed that hundreds to thousands of people who went missing from 2014 to 2016 were kidnapped and killed by Iran-backed militias.