

## THE EARLY PHOENIX

30 December 2022

### IRAN

1. [Iran Makes Clandestine Purchase of Four Airliners to Evade U.S. Sanctions](#) (*Iran International*). The planes started their journeys out of South Africa apparently headed for Uzbekistan but ended up in Iran. The A340s were all produced between 1996 and 2000, so they are 22-26 years old, as are most of the Islamic Republic's dilapidated passenger fleet, because Iran is not allowed to buy any aircraft due to the US sanctions, which have prohibited companies from selling planes that include US-made parts.
2. [Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni Slams the Iranian Regime for Repressing Protestors](#) (*Iran International*). "What is happening today in Iran is unacceptable for us, Italy can no longer tolerate it," she told an end-of-year press conference. If the Iranian regime does not change its stance, Rome will consult with its allies to take more effective action against the Islamic Republic, added Meloni.
3. [Friday Protests in Iran's Sunni Provinces Resemble Sunni Demonstrations in Arab Countries](#) (*Iran International*). A group of Sunni and Shia youths in the city have called for a protest rally on Friday. In the statement, another group of religious leaders in Taybad said the uprising of Iranians is due to "tyranny and discrimination, inequality and injustice, embezzlement and overwhelming political and economic pressures at various levels." The call for these Friday demonstrations and rallies came after several Sunni clerical leaders were detained and taken to unknown locations.
4. [Iran Blames Saudi Arabia for Killing Thousands of Yemenis; Amirabdollahian Meets Top Houthi Official in Oman](#) (*Tasnim Agency*). An IRGC-associated media outlet claimed Saudi airstrikes have killed 2909 lives [without mentioning if those killed were civilians or fighters killed in battle](#). The Houthi government's top negotiator Mohammad Abdul Salam met with Iran's foreign minister in the Omani capital of Muscat on Wednesday to brief him on the latest development in Yemen. The top Iranian diplomat called for the lifting of the Saudi-led "siege" on Yemen for humanitarian reasons while stressing the need to find a negotiated solution to the Yemen crisis—though Iran regards political talks between Yemeni factions as an internal Yemeni issue.
5. [Iran's deteriorating economic conditions could inflame further anti-regime demonstrations throughout the country](#) (*American Enterprise Institute Critical Threats Project*). The Iranian rial has depreciated by approximately 25 percent against the US dollar since protests began on September 16, hitting another historic low on December 28 at 422,000 rials per dollar on the black market. Half of the currency's losses have occurred in the last three weeks, indicating the downward trend is accelerating.

## IRAQ

6. [World Bank Warns Iraq Against Relying Entirely on Oil Trade](#) (*Mustaqila News*). Salim Rouhana, the official in charge of sustainable development programs at the World Bank, said that "The demand for gas has begun to decrease, as the world has begun to turn to it as a transformational source, and to replace it with clean energy such as the sun and air...The decrease in demand is offset by a decrease in the prices of petroleum materials, and therefore a country like Iraq that depends entirely on oil will also decrease its revenues." Rouhana noted that "the climate and development report that was issued recently confirmed that there is a huge amount of investments that Iraq must make."
7. [How Does Iran Withdraw Iraq's Dollars?](#) (*Newsalist*). The depreciation of the Iraqi dinar against the dollar is a repetition of an old game that began under the government of Nouri al-Maliki between 2006 and 2014, and continues to this day after establishing solid bases for it. The bases are private banks that are under the management of party and militia leaders, and work in favor of Iran, and make speculations and transfers that go to Iran directly through its banks in Iraq. Some money goes to Jordan and Turkey before it leaks to other international banks by taking advantage of currency sales by the Central Bank of Iraq.

## NORTH AFRICA

8. [Egypt Places Muslim Brotherhood Leaders on the Terrorist List Again](#) (*Al Sharq Al Awsat*). Egypt has included leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood on the lists of terrorists again. The latest listings, which included a minister and a parliamentarian during the era of former President Mohamed Morsi, came days after an Egyptian court asked authorities in Cairo to place an Interpol "Red Notice" on media professionals loyal to the Muslim Brotherhood.
9. [More than 30,000 Flee Violent Clashes in Southern Sudan; Daglou Travels from Khartoum to Assess the Situation](#) (*An Nahar*). The clashes, which began between armed groups on December 24, forced 30,000 people to flee in the Pibor Al-Kabir administrative region, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. A delegation headed by General Muhammad Hamdan Daglo traveled to assess the situation, including representatives from the army, police, intelligence, and signatories of the October 2020 peace agreement between the government and the rebel groups that fought in the Darfur conflict. The Nyala government has blamed the latest clashes on an attack by the Bedouins that led to wider fighting. A state of emergency was imposed in the region, and joint forces including soldiers from the army and the Rapid Support Forces of Daglo were sent.

## TURKEY

10. [Cavusoglu: Turkey Will Not Allow Greece to Expand "Even One Mile" in the Aegean Sea](#) (*Al Jazeera*). Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu stressed during

the end of the year assessment meeting that his country will not allow Greece to expand "even one mile" in the territorial waters of the Aegean Sea. Cavusoglu warned Greece against being drawn into what he described as adventures and running after false antagonisms, saying, "The end will never be good for you."

11. [PKK Cell Arrested Before Carrying out a Terrorist Operation And Istanbul Announces the Arrest of 18 Foreigners Closely Connected to ISIS, HTS, and Al Qaeda \(Anadolu Agency\)](#). Turkish security took the initiative to arrest the 5 terrorists, after monitoring that they had received instructions from the Iranian "Karash" region, to carry out a terrorist operation in Turkey. Security forces also seized weapons, ammunition, wireless devices, telephones, and digital and paper documents. Security sources in Istanbul conducted simultaneous raids on 21 sites and arrested people believed to be close to the terrorist organization.

## SYRIA

12. [Cavuşoğlu Reveals the Assad Regime's Demands and the Syrian Opposition's Position on Turkey-Assad Normalization \(Baladi news\)](#). Turkish FM Cavusoglu said both Turkey and Russia want to meet with the Syrian regime at the foreign minister level, but no timetable has been set for the meeting. He added: "We are also a guarantor of the Syrian opposition. We do not act against their rights. We are in constant contact with them, and our friends also know." Regarding the Assad regime's demand for Turkey to leave Syria, Cavusoglu said, "At the present time there are terrorist organizations that cannot be controlled. But when there is political stability and everything is going well in the country, Turkey will hand over these lands to Syria."
13. [With Coalition Support, SDF Launches a Security Operation against ISIS in Eastern Syria \(Syria TV\)](#). With the participation of the Internal Security Forces and Coalition Forces, SDF launched an early morning operation in areas from which ISIS launched recent attacks against al-Hawl camp, al-Hasakah, and south of Qamishli. The SDF said the operation will specifically aim to eliminate ISIS cells in the Al-Hol and Tel Hamis areas.