

THE EARLY PHOENIX

21 December 2022

IRAN

1. [**Khamenei Blames US for October Terrorist Attack in Shiraz \(Tehran Times\)**](#). During a meeting with the families of the victims of the Shiraz explosion, Khamenei said that “the terrorist attack has disgraced those who were working behind the scenes of this evil act, referring to the spiteful Americans who are the creators of the Daesh terrorist group.”
2. [**No Word of Any Meeting Between Iran and Saudi Arabia During The Baghdad-2 Conference In Jordan \(Iran International\)**](#). As Amir-Abollahian was reading his statement at the conference, Soleimani’s successor Esmail Ghaani-speaking in Tehran-referred to Saudi Arabia as a “scum and not worthy of being an enemy.”

SYRIA

3. [**Syria TV Reveals Identity of ISIS Leader Targeted by US Forces in Northwest Syria \(Syria TV\)**](#). On Tuesday, private sources revealed to Syria TV the identity of the leader of the "Islamic State" organization (ISIS), who was targeted by the American raid in the city of Al-Bab, east of Aleppo. The targeted leader is called Basaa Ahmed Al-Sawadi, nicknamed "Abi Yasser Al-Yemeni", and he is responsible for producing bombs in the ISIS organization in Syria.
4. [**Assad’s Cousin Rami Makhoul Releases a Statement Predicting a Major Event Bringing a Comprehensive Solution to the Syrian Conflict \(FACEBOOK\)**](#). In a Facebook Post Makhoul said his calculations are based on what is known to some circles in Syria as the “science of numbers.” He said that within weeks there will be “a major event” that the entire world will talk about and that will “dazzle [Syrians] by its greatness,” after which “sanctions will be lifted, the displaced will return, Arab, regional and international diplomatic relations will be restored, and the Syrian file will be closed peacefully.”

IRAQ

5. [**Baghdad Conference Calls for Regional Cooperation Without Specifying How \(Al Hadath\)**](#). Iraq’s Prime Minister said his country will not allow the use of its lands to launch any threats to neighboring countries....Iran’s Foreign Minister said Iran believes that “[security cannot be imported or purchased](#)...Security is a unified and interconnected phenomenon and it is impossible to mobilize all things to destabilize a country and simultaneously stabilize another country”...Saudi Arabia in its turn confirmed its support to Iraq’s sovereignty [without mention of Iran](#).

LEBANON

6. [**Macron Cancels Lebanon Visit as Lebanese Parties Fail to Coalesce Around a Favored Presidential Candidate \(Beirut Observer\)**](#). Macron planned to visit Lebanon to spend the holidays with French troops operating within UNIFIL, but he canceled his visit because there is no president in Lebanon and the government is in caretaker status.

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NORTH AFRICA

7. [**Egypt, Jordan, and Iraq Pledge to Increase Coordination Amid Regional Challenges**](#) (*Ahram Online*). The leaders of Egypt, Iraq, and Jordan met on Tuesday for consultations on regional political developments and unprecedented threats to the security of the Arab World and the Middle East.

YEMEN

8. [**President Al-Alimi Calls on European Union to Designate the Houthis a Terrorist Organization**](#) (*Mareb Press*). Al-Alimi received an EU delegation headed by David McCallister, Chairman of the EU Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee. Al-Alimi stressed the importance of doubling international pressure on the Houthis, and supporting the reforms led by his council as the best way to bring peace and limit the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

THE GULF

9. [**Saudi Foreign Minister Says His Country Rejects Any Attack on Iraqi Territory**](#) (*Al Sharq Al Awsat*). Prince Faisal bin Farhan affirmed Saudi Arabia will stand with Iraq to preserve its stability and sovereignty, support its development efforts, restore its historical status as a land of civilization, science and knowledge, and advance it to a new stage in which national interest takes precedence over any other considerations.

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