



## THE EARLY PHOENIX

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

**12 January 2023**

### IRAN

1. [Dual-National And Ex-Official Sentenced To Death In Iran](#) (*Iran International*). A former Iranian defense ministry official, who holds dual Iranian-British citizenship, has been sentenced to death on charges of spying for the UK. Iranian state media reported Wednesday that Alireza Akbari has been sentenced to death for allegedly spying for MI6.
2. [Nouri Court \[is\] Mirror of Western Human Rights](#) (*Tehran Times [Associated with the Iranian regime]*) "Former Iranian judicial officer Hamid Nouri, 61, who has been unlawfully jailed in Sweden, has criticized a new trial that has been initiated against him, asserting that he would not participate in the 'unfair' process as long as his issues are unresolved. A fresh set of trial hearings for Nouri, who was detained upon his arrival at Stockholm Airport three years ago, started on Wednesday in a Swedish court. Authorities in Sweden claimed that he had participated in the execution and torture of Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO) members in 1988."

### THE GULF

3. [Saudi Arabia Plans to Use Domestic Uranium for Nuclear Fuel](#) (*The New Arab*). Recent exploration has shown a diverse portfolio of uranium in the Gulf Arab state, the world's top oil exporter. Saudi Arabia has a nascent nuclear programme that it wants to expand to eventually include uranium enrichment, a sensitive area given its role in nuclear weapons. Riyadh has said it wants to use nuclear power to diversify its energy mix.

### YEMEN

4. [A Saudi Delegation Visited the Houthis in Sana'a](#) (*Yemen Days*). A prominent [Yemeni] government official revealed the details of the ongoing negotiations between the government of Sana'a and Saudi Arabia to reach common understandings, stressing that the visiting Omani delegation to Sana'a is accompanied by a Saudi delegation. Mukhtar Al-Rahbi, Advisor to the Minister of Information, said in a post on Twitter, "An Omani delegation and a Saudi delegation arrived in Sana'a within the framework of a dialogue that has existed between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis for months, with Omani mediation."

### IRAQ

5. [The Head of the Al-Fateh Alliance Said "America Rejects Iraq's Cooperation with China, Russia and Beloved Iran."](#) (*Al Iraqi News*). Hadi Al-Amiri said in a statement on the sidelines of his meeting with the French ambassador in Baghdad, Eric Chevalier,

“Iraq suffers from the absence of economic independence due to the presence of the Central Bank of Iraq’s reserves in dollars in the US Federal [Reserve] Bank,” explaining that “everyone knows how the Americans use the dollar as a weapon to starve people, and today they are putting pressure on Iraq to prevent its opening up to Europe, China, Russia and Iran.” Al-Amiri called on “French companies to invest in Iraq and contribute to the implementation of large service and strategic projects that would develop the infrastructure in Iraq,” noting that “investment is the real solution to eliminating unemployment and creating job opportunities.”

## EGYPT

6. [Egyptian Pound Continues Unprecedented Fall Against the Dollar](#) (*Ahram Online*). In a dramatic performance on Wednesday, the Egyptian pound hit its lowest-ever price of EGP 31 against the US dollar, losing over 100 percent [sic] of its value since March before slowing down to EGP 29.63 at the Central Bank of Egypt (CBE) and major banks.

## LEBANON

7. [Hussein al-Husseini, Former Parliamentary Speaker and “Godfather of Taif Agreement,” Dead at 86](#) (*Now Lebanon*). Former Lebanese Speaker of Parliament Hussein al-Husseini died Wednesday morning at the age of 86 in the hospital after suffering from health problems. Al-Husseini served as the head of the Amal Movement, of which he was a co-founder, from 1978 until 1980 after the disappearance of the group’s founder Mousa al-Sadr, but stepped down after he refused to allow Amal to fight with the Palestinian Liberation Organization or any other factions in Lebanon. Soon after his departure, Amal entered Lebanon’s bloody civil war.

## TURKIYE

8. [Turkish, Syrian, Russian Foreign Ministers Set to Meet ‘Soon’](#) (*Daily Sabah*). The official, who was not authorized to speak publicly, said the meeting could happen either before or after Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu is scheduled to meet U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken in the United States on Jan. 18. "Discussions are continuing (and) an exact date is not yet set. There are no problems with the meeting, they are just working on the timing," the official said, adding it would occur in either Moscow or another location.

## SYRIA

9. [Jordanian-Russian Talks to Confront Drug Smuggling from Syria](#) (*Enab Baladi*). The Jordanian Foreign Minister, Ayman Safadi, discussed with the Russian President's envoy to Syria, Alexander Lavrentiev, the necessity of establishing security and stability on the Syrian side, and confronting drug smuggling from Syria to Jordan.