



## THE EARLY PHOENIX

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

13 January 2023

### SYRIA

1. [Assad: Turkey's "Occupation" Must End in Order for Possible Meetings with Turkey and Russia to be Fruitful](#) (*Sham News*). Meeting with Assad, Russian envoy to Syria Alexander Lavrentiev indicated Russia looks positively on the tripartite meeting that brought together the defense ministers of Syria, Turkey and Russia, and considers it important to follow up and develop these meetings at the level of foreign ministers. Assad said that in order for these meetings to be fruitful, they must be "based on ending the occupation and stopping support for terrorism."

### TURKIYE

2. [Turkish Prosecutors Launch Probe of Provocation in Sweden Targeting Turkish President](#) (*Andalou Agency*). "A criminal complaint has been filed with the Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, demanding that an investigation be launched into the perpetrators due to the criminal acts targeting our President," Erdogan's lawyer Huseyin Aydin said on Twitter...In the demonstration, staged across from Stockholm's City Hall, supporters of the PKK/YPG terror group hung a figure of Erdogan in effigy by the feet.
3. [After a Demonstration Targeting Erdogan, Turkey Summons the Swedish Ambassador and Hints at Blocking NATO Accession](#) (*Al Jazeera*). On Thursday the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned the Swedish ambassador to Ankara, Staffan Herstom, to protest against what it considered an incitement campaign in the Swedish capital, Stockholm, by the PKK against Turkey, and Ankara hinted at its intention to reject Stockholm's accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

### LIBYA

4. [CIA Director Visited Haftar and Al-Dabaiba](#) (*Asharq Al Awsat*). Amidst strict security measures, CIA Director William Burns made an unannounced visit to Libya yesterday...This visit, which has not been officially announced before, is the first for a high-ranking American official to Libya, nearly two months after the kidnapping of Abu Ajila Masoud al-Marimi, the former Libyan intelligence officer, from his home in

the capital, and his subsequent handover to the American authorities, who are prosecuting him on charges of involvement in making the Lockerbie airplane bomb.

### THE GULF

5. [Saudi Arabia and Egypt Stress the Need for Iran to Avoid Destabilizing Activities \(Asharq Al Awsat\)](#). Meeting in Riyadh, the two countries' foreign ministers stressed the importance of Arab security and the need to address any threats to the region's waterways.

### IRAQ

6. [Iran is Behind the Draining of Dollars from the Iraqi Market \(Al Iraqi News\)](#). On Thursday an official security source disclosed the arrest of a gang that buys US dollars in large quantities from the markets in exchange for counterfeit Iraqi currency. The source confirmed that this gang consists of 8 people belonging to the Kata'ib Hezbollah militia, who purchase dollars not for themselves, but to send to Iran's Revolutionary Guards.
7. [Sudani, McGurk Discuss Security Situation in Iraq \(Bas News\)](#). "Iraq is a unified, independent, and sovereign state, as the priority of the government is to maintain balanced relations and build economic partnerships across the region and the world," Sudani told McGurk, according to the report. The phone call also highlighted supporting Iraq's regional role in establishing bridges between the countries of the region, INA said, noting that Sudani "intends" to send a delegation headed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the United States.

### IRAN

8. [Iran's Soleimani Was Honored In Some British Mosques \(Iran International\)](#). Reports say schoolchildren in some mosques in the UK were taught special lessons in praise of Iranian IRGC Quds Force commander Qassem Soleimani. At least six mosques across the country organized events to honor the former Commander of IRGC Quds Force as a "martyr" after he was killed.

### EGYPT

9. [Egyptian Pound Steady After Day of Tumult as Bankers Report Dollar Flows Unseen in Months \(The National\)](#). The pound slumped to as low as 32.20 to the dollar on Wednesday, from 27.60 at the open of trade, its biggest drop since a devaluation in March. It rebounded to 30.55 at midday on Thursday but later settled



at slightly under 30 after swinging between gains of more than 1 per cent and losses of 3 per cent through the day.

## **LEBANON**

10. **Iranian Foreign Minister Visits Beirut and Calls for Expedited Election of a President (Al Mayadeen)**. Speaking at the Beirut [airport](#), Amir Abdollahian called on Lebanon with all its parties to "accelerate the election of a president for the republic, within consensus and dialogue that satisfies all parties, in order to get out of the presidential vacancy."