



## THE EARLY PHOENIX

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

18 January 2023

### SYRIA

1. [Iranian Foreign Minister: We Welcome the Talks between Turkey and the Syrian Regime \(Syria TV\)](#). Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said that his country welcomes the talks between Turkey and the Syrian regime, claiming that the relations between them serve the interests of the region.
2. [A Russian Ship Carrying Stolen Ukrainian Wheat is Heading to Tartus \(Syria TV\)](#). The Bosphorus Strait Observatory revealed that a Russian ship carrying quantities of stolen Ukrainian wheat crossed the Bosphorus, heading to the port of Tartus on the Syrian coast.
3. [The Jordanian Army Thwarts Drug Smuggling Coming from Syria \(The New Arab\)](#). The official website of the Jordanian Armed Forces stated that the eastern military region carried out an operation at dawn...which resulted in thwarting an attempt by a group of people to cross the border and smuggle large quantities of narcotics from Syrian territory.

### TURKIYE

4. [Turkish Defense Minister: Sweden and Finland Do Not Fulfill their Obligations \(Anadolu agency\)](#). [Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar] stressed that Ankara is waiting to see concrete steps from the two countries regarding ending support for terrorist organizations and lifting export restrictions to Turkey.
5. [Pentagon: Turkey is an Important Partner in the Region and the World \(Anadolu agency\)](#). Pentagon spokesman Patrick Ryder said the decision to provide Turkey with F-16 fighters is up to the Congress, adding that Ankara is an "important partner" for his country not only in the region, but also globally.
6. [Joint Statement After Iran's FM Meeting with Erdogan and Türkiye's FM \(Hurriyet\)](#). After the meeting, Turkish Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu and Iranian Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian held a joint press conference. Regarding the meeting, Minister Çavuşoğlu said, "We have received instructions from our president for the Iranian President's visit to our country, and we will make preparations. We evaluated our bilateral relations in all aspects during the meetings we held today. We also agree on the increase of mutual investments. We also had efforts to increase our natural gas supply from Iran."

### THE GULF

7. [\*\*Saudi Foreign Minister: We have Contacted Iran and are Trying to Find a Path to Dialogue \(Alarabiya\)\*\*](#). Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan said on Tuesday that the kingdom has communicated with Iran and is trying to find a path to dialogue. He added during his speech at a session at the Davos Forum in which Gulf and European ministers participated: "Dialogue is the best way to resolve differences in the region...and we are trying to find a path for dialogue with everyone and focus on development."
8. [\*\*Qatari Foreign Minister: Qatar Never Politicizes Energy \(Aljazeera\)\*\*](#) The Qatari foreign minister added - in statements during the 53rd Davos Forum in the Swiss city of Davos - that the State of Qatar will be ready by 2027 with additional capabilities to pump gas to the global market, especially to the European continent. He said that many policy makers of the transition from fossil energy to clean energy have stopped investing in traditional energy sources over the past years, ignoring that this transition takes a longer time.
9. [\*\*America and the UAE Comment on the Anniversary of the Houthi Bombing of Abu Dhabi \(Alkhaleej Online\)\*\*](#). Biden indicated that in close cooperation with Emirati President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, whom he described as a friend, "the United States will continue to support the UAE in defending itself against threats, whether from Yemen or elsewhere." Biden pledged that "the United States will continue to support the security of the UAE and its other partners in the Middle East, including by providing the necessary military assistance."

## IRAQ

10. [\*\*Commander of the Iranian Quds Force Qaani Arrives in Baghdad Coinciding with the Visit of an American Delegation and Holds Meetings with Iraqi Leaders \(The New Arab\)\*\*](#). An expert on Iraqi political affairs indicated that "Qaani's visit may also be related to the internal disputes that are currently seeping between the forces of the coordination framework on the one hand, and the recent discrepancy between the leaders of the framework and the faction leaders with Prime Minister Muhammad Shia' al-Sudani over the issue of dealing with the military presence of the United States in Iraq".

## IRAN

11. [\*\*Oil Industry Workers Stage New Round Of Strikes In Iran \(Iran International\)\*\*](#). Amid a natural gas shortage in Iran due to the government's inability to invest in production, a new wave of strikes by oil and gas industry workers has kicked off in the country.
12. [\*\*IRGC Navy Holds War Game in Persian Gulf \(Tasnim News\)\*\*](#). IRGC Navy Commander Rear Admiral Ali Reza Tangsiri said a broad range of weapons and equipment have been employed in the war game, including naval cruise missile systems,

drones dropping bombs with pinpoint accuracy, unmanned smart submarine systems, and rockets fired by helicopters.

13. [\*\*The President of the European Commission Supports Placing the Revolutionary Guards on the Terrorist List. \(Asharq Al-awsat\)\*\*](#). The European Union came closer to placing Iran's Revolutionary Guards on the terrorist list, after European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced her openness to the move to respond to the "violation" of basic human rights in the Islamic Republic

## EGYPT

14. [\*\*Egypt Suffers Deficit in its Water Resources Amounting to 35 Billion Cubic Meters \(Asharq Al-awsat\)\*\*](#). Hani Sweilem, Egyptian Minister of Irrigation and Water Resources, said that his country has a deficit of 35 billion cubic meters in available water resources, at a time when Ethiopia is preparing for a fourth filling of the "Renaissance Dam" reservoir on the Nile River, which raises tensions with the downstream countries (Egypt and Sudan).

## SUDAN

15. [\*\*Türkiye, Sudan Emphasize Historic Ties, Co-op in Khartoum Meeting \(Daily Sabah\)\*\*](#). Türkiye's National Intelligence Organization (MIT) chief Hakan Fidan and Abdel Fattah Abdelrahman al-Burhan, commander in chief of the Sudanese Armed Forces, reportedly discussed improving bilateral ties and cooperation at a meeting in the Sudanese capital Khartoum.

## ALGERIA

16. [\*\*Algeria Allocates \\$400 Million to Protect Oil Facilities against Terrorism \(Asharq Al-Awsat\)\*\*](#). The Algerian government has launched a plan consisting of hiring 22,000 guards to protect oil and gas facilities against potential terrorist acts.

## LIBYA

17. [\*\*Intelligence Chief Fidan Discusses Türkiye-Libya Ties with Dbeibah \(Daily Sabah\)\*\*](#). The National Intelligence Organization (MIT) chief Hakan Fidan discussed Türkiye-Libya relations with the head of the Tripoli-based Government of National Unity (GNU), Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah, sources said Tuesday.

## LEBANON

18. [\*\*Nasrallah: The Iranian Fuel Offer is Still Valid for Six Months, and the Americans are Preventing It From Being Implemented \(Lebanon Times\)\*\*](#). Hizballah leader Hassan Nasrallah said that "Iran's leadership, presidency, and government have expressed their readiness to meet Lebanon's needs, but the obstruction occurred on the



Lebanese side, and Iranian Foreign Minister Hussein Amir Abdollahian, during his recent visit, resubmitted the offer to Lebanon...And he stressed that the fuel offer is still valid for a period of six months, and the Americans are preventing it from being implemented, and they informed the officials that it is a red line, and it is possible that they threatened them."