

The Early Phoenix

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

24 January 2023

IRAN

1. [Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major Hosts Assad's Defense Minister \(Syria TV\)](#). The Syrian regime's "SANA" agency said that the regime's defense minister thanked Iran for supporting Syria in its war "against terrorism," stressing the importance of continuing cooperation, consultation and joint coordination. The regime's defense minister indicated that those who imposed economic sanctions on Iran and Syria "lose more because of that," and that Iran "was able to bypass all sanctions." [Tasnim Agency](#) reported that both countries will form new military and security committees as well as [conduct joint military drills](#).

SYRIA

2. [Two Oil Tankers Will Arrive Tomorrow in Syria Within the "Iranian Credit" Line \(Enab Baladi\)](#). Monitoring and tracking sites for ships and oil tankers showed the movement of two Iranian oil tankers with an estimated tonnage of 2.1 million barrels of crude oil, passing through the Egyptian Suez Canal towards the Syrian coast.
3. [Anger in Raqqa Over the Killing of a Female Teacher and her Daughter \(Enab Baladi\)](#). The murder of Nora al-Ahmad (28 years old) took place on January 16, in al-Mashlab neighborhood in Raqqa city, when she returned to her home with her eight-year-old daughter. After demonstrators stormed the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) headquarters near the "Al-Dallah" roundabout in Raqqa, the SDF imposed a total curfew on the city of Raqqa, brought in military forces to the city, and set up barriers at the entrances and exits of the villages. Today, the SDF arrested more than 50 people who participated in the demonstrations that took place to demand the trial of the killers of the school and her daughter, according to activists from Raqqa.

EGYPT

4. [CIA Director William Burns Visits Cairo \(Al Sharq Al Awsat\)](#). According to the official spokesman for the Egyptian presidency, Sisi welcomed the American official, stressing the strength of the Egyptian-American relations and the importance that Egypt attaches to the firm cooperation between the two countries in various fields, especially at the security and intelligence levels, and to support efforts to restore stability in the Middle East in light of the challenges it is witnessing.

TURKIYE

5. [Deepening Cracks in Turkiye's Six-Party Opposition Alliance \(Daily Sabah\)](#). As Türkiye inches ever closer to its next presidential and parliamentary elections likely scheduled for May 14,

the opposition's unknown candidate to rival incumbent President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan remains a source of uncertainty for the Nation Alliance.

6. [**Türkiye 'OK' with Sweden and Finland if Promises are Fulfilled: Akar \(Daily Sabah\)**](#). "We want them to end the heinous, despicable attempts on their lands. If these are accomplished, we have no problem with them," Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar told reporters in Ankara amid renewed strain between his country and Sweden.
7. [**Turkiye Completes the Construction of the Black Sea Gas Pipeline and its Measurement Station \(Anadolu Agency\)**](#). The Turkish Petroleum Transport Company "Botaş" completed the construction of the station for measuring the quantities of natural gas extracted from the Sakarya field in the Black Sea, and its land transport line.
8. [**Seven ISIS Members Arrested in Central Turkiye \(Anadolu Agency\)**](#). Anti-terrorism teams in the central province of Yozgat carried out raids at several addresses, during which they were able to arrest 7 people from Iraq and Syria, on charges of participating in terrorist activities within the ranks of ISIS, including an executioner in the organization.

THE GULF

9. [**The Kuwaiti Government Resigns after Disagreements with the National Assembly \(Al Nahar\)**](#). The clash raged between the government and the National Assembly (parliament) during the past two weeks, over a set of populist laws presented by parliamentarians, including the government's purchase of citizens' loans and re-installing them with interest being dropped, and other proposals that the government considers financially costly.
10. [**Yemeni Security Officials Thwart the Smuggling of 100 Drone Engines on Their Way to the Houthis \(Al Sharq Al Awsat\)**](#). Yemeni official sources said that the security services in Al-Mahra Governorate (in the east of the country) have thwarted the smuggling of 100 drone engines, which were on their way to the terrorist Houthi militia that controls the capital, Sana'a....The vice-chairman of the Yemeni government's Consultation and Reconciliation Commission said on his Twitter account: "100 drone engines belonging to a terrorist group whose arming is prohibited by UN resolutions under Chapter Seven, were attempted to be smuggled through a land port to Yemen."

IRAQ

11. [**Iraq's Prime Minister Al-Sudani Will Visit Washington to Solve the Dollar Crisis \(Al Sharq Al Awsat\)**](#). The Iraqi Prime Minister, Muhammad Shia'a al-Sudani, and his Foreign Minister, Fuad Hussein, are preparing separate visits to Washington soon, with two main files: the "dollar crisis" and the "strategic framework" agreement between Baghdad and Washington...The announcement of Al-Sudani's visit to Washington coincided with his decision to dismiss Central Bank Governor Mustafa Ghaleb Makhaif and Salem Chalabi, director of the Trade Bank of Iraq (TBI), against the background of the significant decline in the exchange rate of the dinar against the US dollar.

12. [Al-Sadr Gives 24 Hour Ultimatum to Sweden for Allowing Quran Burning](#) (*Bas News*). Iraqi Shia cleric and leader of the Sadrist Movement Muqtada al-Sadr has given a 24-hour ultimatum to Swedish authorities over permission to allow a protest in which a copy of the Quran was burnt, to charge the perpetrators of the incident or the Sadrist Movement will take a stance on the issue.

LEBANON

13. [The Port Explosion Investigation Judge Resumes his Work, After Reaching a Dead End](#) (*Al Nahar*). Judge Tariq Al-Bitar made an exceptional decision to continue the investigation into this case. He issued two decisions, the first of which was to release five detainees who had been held in the case, and the second was to summon eight people, including two security officials and judges, for interrogation as defendants. A new judicial development has begun and it is too early to predict where it will reach.

ISRAEL

14. [Herzog to Launch A New Initiative to Heal Rifts in the Nation](#) (*Jerusalem Post*). Israel President Herzog intends to establish an education center at the President's Residence that will foster a sense of belonging among the various communities of Israel...In his address to a broad-based education conference in Tel Aviv that will also be attended by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, other ministers, members of Knesset, mayors and teachers, Herzog will outline a five-year plan that should bear fruit by the time that Israel celebrates its 80th anniversary, the year in which Herzog will conclude his seven-year term of office. If the initiative proves to be successful, it will be historically recorded as Herzog's legacy to the state.
15. [Coalition Heads Join Shas Party Meeting in Support of Deri: PM Vows to 'Fix' Deri's Dismissal](#) (*The Times of Israel*). In a rare move, members of all the coalition parties joined Shas's weekly Knesset faction meeting on Monday to express support for Shas party leader Aryeh Deri, who was fired as a cabinet minister on Sunday in line with a High Court of Justice ruling that his appointment was inappropriate in light of his past financial crimes...Speaking at the meeting, Netanyahu reaffirmed his commitment to return Deri to the government, just a day after he was forced to fire him from his roles as interior and health minister.