

The Early Phoenix

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

25 January 2023

TURKIYE

1. [Sweden Wants to Restart Dialogue with Türkiye after Quran Burning](#) (*Daily Sabah*). Sweden wants to resume dialogue with Türkiye, Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said Tuesday, shortly after the latter announced that it has canceled upcoming talks with Stockholm and Helsinki on their NATO membership following the Quran burning incident on the weekend. "Our collective message is that we want to call for calm, for reflection, for calm in the process so that we can return to functioning talks between Sweden, Finland and Türkiye on our common NATO membership," Kristersson told a news conference, adding that he wanted a return to "dialogue."

2. [Turkey: No Normalization with Damascus at the Expense of the Syrians](#) (*Al Sharq Al Awsat*). Turkey has renewed its assurances that it will not take any decision in the path of normalization from the regime of President Bashar al-Assad that would harm the Syrians residing there or those in the opposition-held areas in northern Syria. Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar stressed that his country will not take any decision that would harm the Syrians in Turkey or those residing in northwestern Syria.

ISRAEL AND JORDAN

3. [Netanyahu Visits King Abdullah of Jordan to Discuss Dispute over Al Aqsa](#) (*Al Nahar*). Jordan's King Abdullah II held a rare meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu Tuesday in Amman, the first since the latter's recent return to power, and they discussed the status quo at Al-Aqsa Mosque...King Abdullah stressed "the need to respect the historical and legal status quo in Al-Aqsa Mosque and not to prejudice it."

IRAN

4. [US Says Will Increase Pressure On China To Stop Iran Oil Imports](#) (*Iran International*). The Biden Administration will pressure China to stop importing Iranian crude oil, US Special Envoy for Iran Robert Malley told Bloomberg television on Tuesday...Latest estimates are that small Chinese refineries are buying at least 700,000 barrels per day at discounted prices through middlemen and illicit channels. Beijing does not officially report the Iranian oil cargoes as they are usually labeled as shipments from other countries.

5. [Iranian Football Player Suspended For Solidarity With Protesters](#) (*Iran International*). Reza Shekari, 24, a member of Gol Gohar club, who scored one of the goals against another team on Saturday, told reporters that he did not express happiness after scoring the goal because of the situation in the country

and in respect to people who mourn those killed during anti-government protests. He was summoned for his comments by the disciplinary committee of the Iranian Football Federation to be suspended.

NORTH AFRICA

6. [**France and Algeria Sign "Roadmap" to Enhance Military and Security Cooperation**](#) (*Al Jazeera*). On Monday, Algerian Army Chief of Staff Saeed Chanegriha began a visit to Paris for an undisclosed duration. He met with French President Emmanuel Macron at the Elysee Palace, and delivered a message from his Algerian counterpart, Abdelmadjid Tebboune. The visit bears a symbolic significance, as it is the first for an Algerian army commander to France in about 17 years.

SYRIA

7. [**France Repatriates 15 Women and 32 Children from ISIS Detention Camps**](#) (*Enab Baladi*). The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced in a statement on Tuesday, January 24, its new operation to return French children and mothers from the ISIS detention camps.

LEBANON

8. [**On Charges of Supporting Hizballah, US Sanctions Three Lebanese**](#) (*Al Nahar*). On Tuesday the US Treasury Department sanctioned Lebanese financial expert Hassan Makled and his two sons for facilitating Hizballah's financial activities via their exchange company.

IRAQ

9. [**Iraqi Judiciary Issues Arrest Warrant Against Former MP for Defamation**](#) (*Al Nahar*). The Iraqi judiciary issued a new arrest warrant against former Iraqi Member of Parliament Faeq Al-Sheikh Ali on charges of defamation...Previously, in January 2022, the Iraqi judiciary issued an arrest warrant against him after he was accused by Badr Organization leader Hadi Al-Amiri of "making threats."

GULF REGION

10. [**Riyadh will Host Next World Heritage Committee**](#) (*Al Sharq Al Awsat*). The World Heritage Committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) approved the decision to host Saudi Arabia's 45th expanded session of the committee, in the capital, Riyadh, from September 10 to September 25.