

Weekly^{wire}



The MENA Region: Shared Insecurity in the Era of Multipolarity Taskforce

NOVEMBER 13, 2020

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

Turkey extends the research period of Oruç Reis in the Mediterranean

In the early hours of Wednesday, Turkey announced a new NAVTEX (Navigational Telex) extending the period of the research activities of Oruç Reis in the Mediterranean. The previous NAVTEX was expiring on the 14th of November, while the new NAVTEX extended the Turkish seismic research vessel's activities until the 23rd of November near the Greek island of Kastellorizo.

Turkish Foreign Ministry Spokesman responds to the Greek claims

Hami Aksoy, the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, responded to the Greek announcements regarding the newly declared Navtex of Oruç Reis. During the press conference on Thursday, Aksoy said Turkey considers the Greek claims, which states that Turkish seismic research vessel operating in the Eastern Mediterranean is violating the international law, as null and void. He added that these claims are based on the maximalist Greek maritime boundary claims contrary to international law. Lastly, Aksoy underlined that Turkey would protect its sovereign rights and the rights of the Turkish Cypriots, and if Greeks are sincere with their calls for solutions, they should respond to the Turkish calls for dialogue instead of provoking Turkey and asking for the interference of third parties.

Cairo and Athens agree to deepen their cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean

On Wednesday, Egypt and Greece announced that they are willing to deepen their cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean. Speaking in the press conference after the visit to the Greek capital, the Egyptian President claimed that they are willing to expand the EEZ agreement that brought "peace, prosperity, and cooperation" to the region. Besides, Abdelfattah el-Sisi said that they have agreed with Greece to strengthen each other in defense relations.

THE LIBYAN CRISIS

International Criminal Court: Egypt must extradite people accused of war crimes in Libya

The International Criminal Court has demanded that the Egyptian authorities hand over the wanted men against whom arrest warrants were issued, on the grounds of being accused of committing war crimes in Libya. This came during a session of the UN Security Council, held on a television channel, to present the periodic report of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court on Libya.

Bensouda, a lawyer and international criminal law prosecutor, said, "Egypt is obligated to hand over all fugitives to justice," calling on the authorities to hand over "Al-Tuhamy Mohamed Khaled (the former head of the Libyan Internal Security Agency), who claims to be on Egyptian territory."

And Al-Tuhamy Mohamed Khaled, wanted by the International Criminal Court, by an order issued by it in April 2017, on suspicion of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity from February 24, 2011, until August 24 of the same year.

The Egyptian army comes up with a strategy to counter the military intervention in Libya

The Egyptian Armed Forces announced a military strategy symposium to find the most appropriate solutions to face the challenges facing national and regional security. And said that the Military Research Authority organized the strategic seminar for the research year 2020, under the title "The National Strategy to Confront Threats of International and Regional Intervention in the Libyan Crisis and Its Impact on National Security."

The head of the Egyptian Military Research Authority emphasized that the Egyptian-Libyan relations are not only geographical neighborhood relations, but rather close historical relations that extend to different eras. He pointed out that the Military Research Authority had reached a national strategy proposal to face the challenges resulting from international and regional intervention in the Libyan crisis.

Libya: 6th round of Libyan 5+5 military commission talks begins in Sirte

The UN mission announced that the sixth round of talks of the Joint Libyan Military Commission (5+5) would start in Sirte, north-central Libya, on Tuesday. The UN mission added in a statement that this round of talks would continue until November 13; In the presence and participation of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, and explained that this round is being held to accelerate the implementation of the ceasefire agreement signed in Geneva on October 23.

At least five people die in a shipwreck off Libya

A rescue charity has reported that at least five people have died in the latest shipwreck in the central Mediterranean, warning that as rescue operations continue, the number of deaths could grow. Open arms (a Spanish NGO) said that around 100 people had been traveling for about two days on a dinghy that collapsed in international waters off Libya and mentioned that it was carrying out the rescue operation on its own, with just two speedboats and six rescuers.

REGIMES IN TRANSITION

Lebanon

US Treasury Imposed Sanctions on Top Lebanese Politician Gebran Bassil

US Treasury Department imposed Global Magnitsky Act sanctions on Lebanese politician Gebran Bassil over alleged corruption through the steering of Lebanese government funds to individuals close to him during his career as Minister of Energy. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo accused Bassil of being “notorious for corruption” and of “undermining good governance that aided and abetted Hezbollah’s destabilizing activities.” Gebran Bassil is President Aoun’s son-in-law, the leader of the Free Patriotic Movement with the biggest block in parliament, former Foreign Minister, and leading candidate for the presidency in two years. Sanctions cover the blockage of Bassil’s all property and interests in property and any entities owned 50 percent or more by him.

Sanctions are imposed in Washington’s “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran which had switched focus to Hezbollah in recent months and Bassil is known for his close ties with Hezbollah. Bassil responded to the sanctions as “unjust and politically motivated.” In their statement, Hezbollah considered sanctions as “blatant and gross interference in Lebanon’s internal affairs.” Also, President Michel Aoun has asked caretaker Foreign Minister Charbel Wehbe to collect the evidence used by the US Treasury Department to impose sanctions on MP Gebran Bassil. Any relevant documents will be handed to the judiciary for investigation.

Tunisia

President Saied and French Interior Minister Discussed Illegal Migration and Terrorism

Tunisian President Kais Saied received French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin during a tour to North African countries to discuss the recent terrorist attack in Nice and illegal migration. Members of the Tunisian parliament criticized Interior Minister Tawfiq Sharaf Eddine for accepting the deportation of Tunisian citizens, considering it part of a systemic policy against Tunisia. The parliamentary bloc of the Heart of Tunisia party (Qalb Tunis) also blamed President Saied for not standing up against external pressures. The Interior Minister Sharaf Eddine stressed that Tunisia has a framework agreement with France in 2008 to organize the return of Tunisians, denying that there is any campaign of “mass deportation.”

Ghannouchi Denied Running for the Presidency of Ennahda Party

Amidst the ongoing debates around Rached Ghannouchi's third term candidacy for the presidency of Ennahda party, Ghannouchi confirmed that he will not run for the presidency of the Ennahda. The Speaker of the Assembly of People's Representatives made this statement in a TV interview on Sunday, November 8, affirming that the party will be able to overcome its internal disputes. He also denied having asked for the postponement of the 11th general conference of the party. Previously, 100 leaders from Ennahda had signed asking Ghannouchi not to run for a third term. Last week, a former political adviser to Ghannouchi, Lotfi Zaitoun, announced his resignation from the movement.

Algeria

Algeria Expressed Reservation to Welcome Immigrants from France

After his visit to Tunisia, French Interior Minister Gerald Dermanin visited Algeria to negotiate the deportation of Algerian immigrants, including a mosque imam from France. France is asking that Algeria refrain from prosecuting the deported before the judiciary as a way to persuade them to return to their home country. However, Algerian officials stated their hesitation over the French demand, considering it to infringe on the country's sovereignty.



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ABOUT AL SHARQ STRATEGIC RESEARCH

A think tank that looks to undertake impartial, rigorous research to promote the ideals of democratic participation, an informed citizenry, multi-stakeholder dialogue and social justice.

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