



Al Sharq Weekly

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Iran

Tehran and Washington's Agreement on a Prisoner Swap, Confirming Details of It.

New details of the deal between US- Iran gets to be shared. The deal was known to be a swap between each country's 5 prisoners, also the US granting Iran an access to \$6 billion of its frozen assets abroad from the actual amount that was known to be \$7 billion, yet due to currency it decreased. This development occurred while an ongoing indirect negotiations aimed at reviving the 2015 nuclear deal, which the US had unilaterally withdrawn from in 2018. While the broad outlines of the agreement were established months ago, final technical details were still being worked out. The funds will be transferred to Europe and then to Qatar for enabling Iran to access. The release of prisoners, potentially mediated by Qatar or Oman, is anticipated shortly after Iran confirms access to the funds, with reports suggesting it could occur as early as next week.

Iraq

Kirkuk Conflict Escalates, Reaches A Breaking Point

Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Prime Minister Masrour Barzani has called on U.S. President Joe Biden to step in and address a growing crisis with Iraq's central government in Baghdad, expressing concerns that if this situation remains unaddressed, it could potentially lead to the disintegration of the Kurdistan Region as a viable entity.

In the leaked letter to Biden, dated Sept. 3, Barzani called up the United States to mediate and diffuse the crisis, warning of Iraqi Kurdistan's collapse and hoping to galvanize the administration into action before a descent into violence and chaos.

Such violence has already begun, however, and it has been reaching an apex in the past few weeks in Kirkuk. On September 2, groups purportedly transported by Shiite militia groups supported by Iran engaged in conflicts related to a court ruling that barred Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iraq (KDP) from regaining control of its regional headquarters; the parties involved included Arab and Turkmen tribal protesters and Kurdish counter-protesters. Four Kurds are reported to have died in the protests, which were ultimately suppressed by federal forces dispatched to the city.

Lebanon

A New Ceasefire Agreement in Ain al-Hilweh Camp

The media office of Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri has announced that a ceasefire has been reached in the Ain al-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp, which took effect at 6 p.m. local time on Thursday.

The clashes between Fatah and the “Muslim Youth” group constitute a new violation of the ceasefire agreement reached last Monday, following a meeting between Palestinian officials and Lebanese security forces. These developments follow a month-long lull that came after armed confrontations at the end of last July, resulting in the deaths of 14 individuals.

The estimated population of Palestinian refugees in Ain al-Hilweh camp is around 300,000 refugees. It’s important to note that the Lebanese army and security forces do not enter the camps in accordance with previous implicit agreements. They entrust the task of maintaining security within the camps to the Palestinians themselves, while the Lebanese army enforces strict measures around the perimeter.

Egypt

The Egyptian and Turkish Presidents Meet on the Sidelines of the G20 Summit in India

In their first official meeting, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi discussed bilateral relations between Türkiye and Egypt as well as various regional and international issues. During this meeting, Erdoğan expressed his wishes that bilateral relations will reach the desired level in the near future. He also praised the Egyptian government for its support of Turkish investors, emphasizing Türkiye’s commitment to revitalizing cooperation between Ankara and Cairo in areas such as liquefied natural gas, nuclear energy, culture, and education.

A Withhold in The US Military Aid to Egypt

US plans to withhold \$85 million in its military aid to Egypt. As indicated in a letter from the State Department to congressional committees, the US conditioned the disbursement of \$85 million on the release of political prisoners. Furthermore, the lawmakers have encouraged the Biden administration to hold back an additional \$235 million since Egypt did not apply the agreed conditions on human rights and benchmarks that were set by the US. Previously, Washington has held back some other portions of the \$320 million of the foreign military finances to Egypt, with the condition of meeting democracy and human rights standards.

Sudan

Al-Burhan Ends His First Foreign Tour Since the Outbreak of the Conflict in Sudan

The head of the Sudanese Sovereignty Council, Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, returned back from Türkiye on Thursday after a foreign tour started at the end of August. Türkiye was Al-Burhan’s fifth stop, as he began his tours with a visit to Egypt, followed by visits to South

Sudan, Qatar, and Eritrea. Al-Burhan's visits, according to many reports, are part of mediation efforts that aim at containing the escalating conflict between the Sudanese army and the Rapid Support Forces under the leadership of Mohamed Hamdan Daglo.

Hundreds of Deaths in West Darfur as the Internal Conflicts Continue

The United Nations Integrated Mission to Support the Transition in Sudan (UNITAMS) said on Wednesday that it had received credible reports of the presence of at least 13 mass graves in El Geneina in West Darfur. Volker Türk, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, accused the Sudanese Rapid Support Forces and allied militias of committing these attacks that resulted in hundreds of deaths, most of them from Masalit tribes.

In another vein, the UN Secretary-General's envoy to Sudan, Volker Perthes, announced his resignation on Wednesday months after he was classified as an undesirable person by the authorities in Khartoum.

Morocco

Rescue Efforts Continue After a Massive Earthquake

A devastating 6.8 magnitude earthquake struck Morocco last Friday, causing widespread destruction in villages and cities unprepared for such force. The official death toll exceeds 2,000, with expectations of it rising as rescuers reach hard-hit remote areas. Despite numerous global offers, Morocco has chosen to initially accept search-and-rescue teams only from the UK, Spain, Qatar, and the UAE, countries with whom it shares strong bilateral ties. Morocco reportedly wants to maintain control of the situation and does not want to risk the potential chaos of an assistance influx. This has drawn frustration from rescue teams and baffled foreign governments, who offered help as soon as news broke of Friday's earthquake.

Algeria has shown support to Morocco by opening its airspace for medical and humanitarian flights. Further, it pledged its readiness to provide aid itself and to mobilize the necessary material and human resources, if Morocco requests such help. In a statement on Saturday, Algeria's Foreign Ministry "[extended] deepest condolences and sincere sympathy to the families of the victims of the brotherly Moroccan people." The relationship between the two countries has long been precarious due to at-odds political programs. In 2021, Algeria severed its diplomatic ties with Morocco, disavowing its "bullish approach" toward the disputed Western Sahara region as well as its growing ties with Israel. Notably, Morocco's King Mohammed VI declined aid also from Türkiye as well as France, who maintains strained relations with Morocco.

Libya

Flooding Devastation Draws in Regional Humanitarian Assistance

On Sunday, Storm Daniel flooded several areas of eastern Libya, particularly the cities of Derna, Benghazi, al-Bayda, al-Marj and Soussa. The catastrophic natural disaster has claimed the lives of thousands, with recent reports estimating nearly 20,000. The head of Libya's Tripoli-based unity government, Abdul Hamid Dbeibah, declared all areas exposed to the storm and floods "disaster zones." After declaring a state of emergency, which included suspending classes at all educational institutions and closing shops, Libyan authorities called for international support to tackle damage.

Numerous countries within MENA have pledged their support and sent assistance. Türkiye, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, UAE, Kuwait, and Qatar have sent humanitarian aid planes carrying rescuers, relief cargo, and aid. Furthermore, Egypt had declared three days of national mourning in solidarity with Morocco and Libya, and Egypt's President Sisi has directed the creation of refugee camps to provide shelter for survivors, given Libya's proximity to Egypt.

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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