



MIDDLE EAST WEEKLY

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Middle East in a Week

Regarding international relations and world politics, the Middle East may be the most controversial region in the current times. On the one hand it sits on most of the world's oil reserves, while on the other hand, it inhibits the followers of the most controversial religion in the world, Islam. These matters combined have created a region filled with drastic events. Every day, there are new wars erupting in the region and every day, there are new ways through which the west and the far east try to increase their influence in the region. This region inhibits 411 million people out of which 28 % are under the age of 25 years old. This newsletter tries to give weekly updates on the important issues in the Middle East and combining them with some analysis, hopes to have a role in changing the region's situation to the better.

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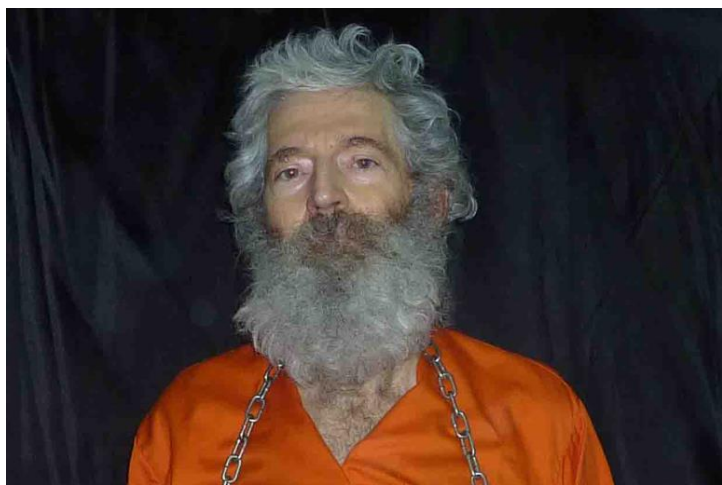
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A MOMENT OF SUNSHINE AMDIST YEARS OF DARKNESS¹

It took several months of vast campaigning, but eventually the orphaned 5-year-old girl was able to leave the Syrian refugee camp and join her family in Canada. Known publicly as Amira, her parents were suspected Islamic State sympathizers. They were killed in a 2019 airstrike in Syria. Her uncle, who lives in Canada, visited her in a refugee camp while lobbying for her to be repatriated. But for months, the government deemed it too dangerous to bring her back. On Monday, Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs Francois-Philippe Champagne said the girl was being reunited with her extended family in Canada, and asked the media to respect her privacy. In June, Human Rights Watch, an international organization, criticized Canada for failing to repatriate dozens of citizens - including at least 26 children - with alleged ties to the Islamic State (IS) back from Syria. Almira was being held in the al-Hawl refugee camp, which houses thousands of family members of IS.



**Dependents of Islamic State fighters are being held
at al-Hawl detention center in northern Syria**



ROBERT LEVINSON

US DEMANDING USD 1.4 BILLION FROM IRAN²

Amidst all the tension between Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States over the Nuclear Deal and Iran's use of ballistic missiles, as well as Iran's role in Yemen, Syria and Palestine, an American court decided to fine Iran's government for USD 1.4 billion for the disappearance of a former FBI agent who went missing during a visit to an Island in Iran in 2007. In an order issued late last week, US District Judge Timothy Kelly said he adopted a special expert's recommendation that Robert Levinson's family be awarded \$107m in compensatory damages. The judge awarded punitive damages of \$1.3bn. "Iran's conduct here is also unique, given that – astonishingly – it plucked a former FBI and DEA special agent from the face of the earth without warning, tortured him, held him captive for as long as 13 years, and to this day refuses to admit its responsibility," Kelly said. Earlier this year, Levinson's family said they believed he died in Iranian custody, based on information from US officials. Iran denied that and said the former FBI agent had left the country "years ago".

PRIME MINISTER RESIGNS AS PROTESTS GO ON³

Kyrgyzstan's Prime Minister Kubatbek Boronov has stepped down after the Central Electoral Commission annulled the results of Sunday's parliamentary elections in response to accusations of vote-rigging. Boronov and Dastan Jumabekov, the speaker of the country's parliament, presented their resignation letters at a meeting of legislators in the capital Bishkek on Tuesday. At an emergency session on Tuesday, the parliament appointed Sadyr Zhaparov, a founder of the opposition Mekenchil party, which had lost the election, as acting prime minister. Earlier on Tuesday, Zhaparov had been released by protesters from prison, where he was serving a sentence of 11 years and six months for taking a government official hostage in 2013. Thousands took to Ala-Too's square on Monday to protest against electoral fraud. The riots that ensued saw the security services respond with tear gas, rubber bullets and shock grenades against the protesters, killing one 19-year-old and injuring 590.



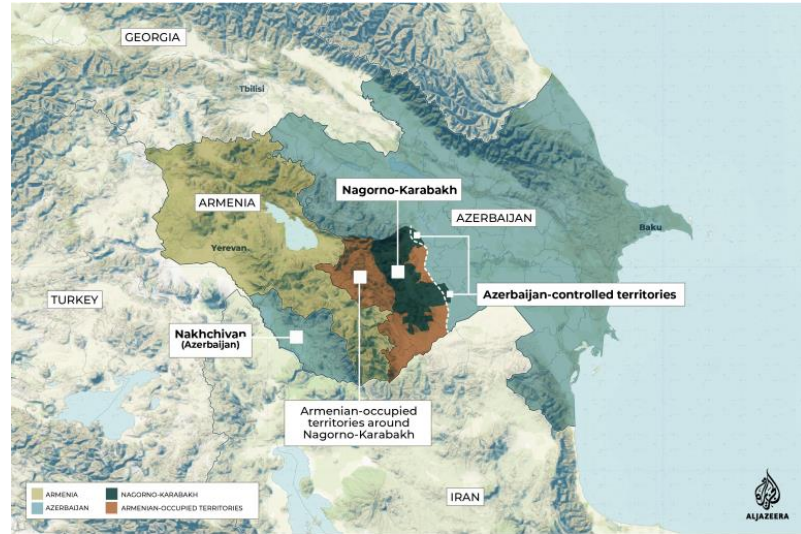
ROHANI AND ALIYEV DISCUSS SECURITY IN KARABOK⁵

On Tuesday October 6th Iran's president, Hasan Rohani in a phone call to Aliyev considered Azerbaijan to be a friendly neighbor. "All Iranians have such close historical, cultural and ethical connections with Azerbaijan and Iran's government as well as its people have always had close ties with Azerbaijan" said the Iranian president. Rohani, worried about the possibility of foreign intervention and escalation of this conflict into a regional war, emphasized that: "security, stability and peace in our northern borders is of outmost importance to us and we should not let it be a doorway for terrorist into the region". According to the president's statement, Iran is ready for aiding the peace between the two countries in any ways possible which is of course in accordance to the international legal system. Aliyev in response to Rohani's concerns, claimed Iran's security to be the same as Azerbaijan's security for him. "we will not allow this conflict to be the cause of unrest in the neighboring countries" said Aliyev.



ARMENIA IS READY TO TAKE A STEP TOWARDS PEACE⁴

Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said Tuesday that he was sure Russia would come to its defence if necessary in its conflict with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. "In case of a security threat to Armenia, Russia's engagement will be subject to our treaty framework," Pashinyan told AFP news agency in an interview in Yerevan. "I am confident that as per the situation, Russia will uphold its treaty obligations." Yet, with little to no help coming from Russia, Armenia claimed to be ready for concessions and that is only if Azerbaijan is willing to do the same. Further on the matter, the Russian foreign minister as well as his Iranian counterpart, expressed their concerns for the situation as Syrian and Libyan fighters are getting involved. The Karebak conflict is one of many conflicts that happens in the Middle East on a daily basis. For being rich in oil and poor in institutions, this region has become the playground for world powers to test their strength and take what they will. As a result, many lives are lost each year and many children are left without parents or even without a place to call home. As things are at the moment, Karebak's situation will resolve just in time for a new crisis to arise.



Editor:

Sahand EP Faez

Centre for Studies on South Asia and the Middle East,
National Chung Hsing
University, Taichung, Taiwan

Email: submissions.cssame@gmail.com

Tel: +886-4-22840310

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