



# MIDDLE EAST WEEKLY

Month: Mar 26 | Issue 33 | CSSAME

## *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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## ***1 OUT OF 4 WERE CHILDREN<sup>1</sup>***

A recently published report shows that with 2,300, 1 out of every 4 civilian casualty in Yemen since 2018 has been a child. “This is a man-made disaster resulting from a conflict that is being waged with near-complete disregard for the wellbeing and safety of the civilian population,” Gabriella Waaijman, global humanitarian director for Save the Children, said. Save the Children’s report comes on the heels of a UNICEF statement issued on Saturday, saying eight children were killed and 33 wounded this month alone. Philippe Duamelle, UNICEF’s representative to Yemen, said the casualties happened in several areas including the provinces of Taiz and Hodeidah, where fighting between forces of the internationally recognized government and Iran-aligned Houthi rebels has recently intensified. The military intervention came after the Houthis removed the internationally recognized government in late 2014 and captured vast swathes of the country’s territory.



## ***YOU WILL BE TAKEN CARE OF<sup>2</sup>***



The Guardian reported that Saudi officials threatened Agnes Callamard, the UN investigator. In January 2020, her life was threatened publicly. In an interview with the British newspaper, the outgoing special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary killings said a UN colleague alerted her in January 2020 that an unnamed Saudi official twice threatened in a meeting with other senior UN officials in Geneva to have Callamard “taken care of”. Callamard, a French national, will be joining the human rights watchdog Amnesty International as secretary-general this month, according to the news report. She was the first official to investigate the murder of Washington Post columnist Khashoggi, who was killed by Saudi agents at the kingdom’s consulate in Istanbul in October 2018, and publish a detailed report. She was told the Saudis criticised her work on the Khashoggi probe, voicing anger about her investigation and conclusions, the Guardian reported. The Saudi officials also claimed she received money from Qatar, an allegation frequently used against critics of the Saudi government.



## ***THE SHOW IS STILL ON<sup>3</sup>***

Once more Israeli forces began bombarding what they called “ *Hamas Rocket Manufacturing Sites*”. They claimed it was in response to rocket fire from the besieged Palestinian enclave. A witness in Gaza told the AFP news agency that the Israeli military hit Hamas positions in the southern parts of the Strip just after 2:30am (00:30 GMT) on Wednesday. The Associated Press also reported an explosion over Gaza in the early hours of Wednesday. The Israeli military said its fighter jets and attack helicopters struck a Hamas rocket manufacturing site and a military post “in response to the rocket fired from Gaza into Israel tonight”. An Israeli military spokesperson told AFP a rocket from Gaza had hit an open field in southern Israel. Gaza, with a population of more than 2 million, is governed by the Hamas movement but the enclave remains under a strict Israeli land, air and naval blockade. The UN has dubbed it an “open-air prison”. Hundreds of Palestinians have been killed in recent years as they protested against the blockade, which Israel has justified on security grounds.



## ***WOMEN, YES...CHILDREN NO!!!<sup>5</sup>***

Yazidi elders welcomed several women who were enslaved by ISIL forces. However, they refused to accept the children born out of ISIL forces. Earlier this month, nine Yazidi women were reunited for the first time in years with their 12 children – all born to members of the armed group ISIL (ISIS) who brutally persecuted the Yazidi community in northern Iraq and enslaved its women. The reunification followed months of lobbying and negotiations between former US diplomat, Peter Galbraith, the Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government, and Kurdish officials in Syria. They reached a deal allowing the children to leave the Al-Hol refugee camp in eastern Syria and cross the border into Iraq. Despite the breakthrough, Yazidi elders have refused to let the children join the small religious community, which considers them outcasts who can never be allowed into society. The decision has left their mothers, already traumatized by years of violence and atrocities, facing a wrenching choice between keeping their children or staying with their community.

## **PALESTINIAN-ISRAEL PARTY HAVING HOPES<sup>4</sup>**

The results of the latest election seems to have given the palestinians a leg up in choosing the next prime minister of Israel. A small Palestinian-Israeli party has unexpectedly won crucial seats in Israel's election, potentially putting it in a position to choose Israel's next prime minister. The United Arab List (UAL), also known by the Hebrew name Ra'am, appears to have clinched just five seats in the 120-member Knesset, but it could decide whether Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving prime minister, remains in office. It is an odd predicament for Netanyahu, who rose to power by rejecting compromise with the Palestinians and has used racist rhetoric in past campaigns to cast the country's Arab minority as a fifth column of "terrorist" sympathisers. Unless another party decides to switch sides, each would need the support of Mansour Abbas, leader of the UAL, to form a government and avoid yet another round of elections. With about 90 percent of votes counted on Wednesday, Netanyahu, 71, and his natural allies, and the bloc opposing him, each lack a 61-seat majority in the Knesset.



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### **References & Further Readings**

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