



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.

Inside This Issue

ONE FOR THE JORDANIANS

BAHRAIN: WE TRIED

FAILED ATTACK ON IRAN'S NUCLEAR FACILITIES

HAMAS: STOP POKING THE BEAR

ABDEL AZIZ REFUSING THE CONDITIONS OF HOUSE ARREST

ONE FOR THE JORDANIANS¹

For the first time, a high-ranking official went in front of a judge in Jordan. An unprecedented event which gave the Jordanians much pleasure. Jordan's former finance minister and chief of the Royal Hashemite Court, Bassem Awadallah, appeared in the State Security Court this week to face charges of sedition over his alleged role in conspiring with Prince Hamzah bin Al Hussein, the half-brother of King Abdullah, to destabilize the country and remove its longtime monarch. "God-willing Awadallah will rot in prison," Ahmed, a 42-year-old Jordanian businessman who asked Al Jazeera to withhold his identity over security concerns, said at a cafe near Amman's downtown district. The trial, which is closed to the media and public, is the latest in a culmination of events that began on April 3 when Prince Hamzah was placed under house arrest. Since then, revelations of the plot have exposed deep rifts within the Hashemite family, which has ruled Jordan uninterrupted since its founding in 1921.



BAHRAIN: WE TRIED²

According to Bahrain's foreign minister, there has been attempts done by Bahrain to strengthen its relations with Qatar. Quoting the Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullatif bin Rashid al-Zayani, the foreign ministry on Tuesday "affirmed that the Kingdom of Bahrain hopes that the State of Qatar will take into account in its foreign policy the unity of the Gulf". According to the press release, Bahrain sent the invitations "in an attempt to move forward in strengthening the process of joint Gulf cooperation". "The Minister further highlighted that unity among the member states of the GCC is a popular demand for all its people, which was stipulated in the Al-Ula summit statement." In February, Bahrain said it had sent an initial invitation to Qatar the previous month but there had been no response. According to a report by Doha News, Qatar delayed its response because the invite was carried through a "media announcement", GCC Secretary-General Nayef Falah Mubarak al-Hajraf had told Bahraini foreign minister al-Zayani.



FAILED ATTACK ON IRAN'S NUCLEAR FACILITIES³

Just recently, there was an attack on a building belonging to Iran's Atomic Agency. However, it did not succeed. An Iranian news site close to security services said authorities thwarted a "sabotage attack" on the country's civilian nuclear program on Wednesday, without providing further information. Social media channels linked to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said a drone tried to attack the building. Another report said no "loss of life or property damage" was inflicted. Nournews, a website believed to be close to Iran's Supreme National Security Council, reported the attack was halted "before causing any damage to the building". When asked for comment, an Iranian official referred to the Nournews report. The official spoke on condition of anonymity as they did not have authorization to discuss the matter with the media.



HAMAS: STOP POKING THE BEAR⁵

Hamas rejects the idea of prisoner exchange as the prerequisite of rebuilding war-torn Gaza. Palestinian factions in the Gaza Strip have warned Israel against delays in lifting restrictions imposed on the Hamas-ruled coastal enclave and impeding reconstruction after last month's devastating attacks. The warning was issued on Tuesday after leaders of various factions in the Gaza Strip met in a Hamas office to discuss the latest developments surrounding a ceasefire reached in May between Israel and Hamas, which ended the 11-day Israeli assault on Gaza. The Palestinian factions presented a list of demands to Israel that included the reopening of border crossings, allowing the transfer of financial aid from Qatar, and the reopening of Gaza's fishing zone. Palestinian factions said they rejected attempts to link reconstruction efforts in Gaza to a prisoner swap. "We will not accept pressure on our people or any attempt to link files with each other," the factions said in a statement. Israel has demanded that Hamas hand over two Israeli civilians and the bodies of two soldiers held by the group.



ABDEL AZIZ REFUSING THE CONDITIONS OF HOUSE ARREST⁴

Mauritania's former president, refused to comply with the conditions of his house arrest. The ex-leader says he is being persecuted in a bid to keep him out of politics but has vowed he would not go into exile. A prosecutor speaking on condition of anonymity and the spokesman of the former president's party, Djibril Ould Bilal, confirmed his detention on Tuesday without citing the reason. Aziz has twice gone before a magistrate investigating the case since the charges, including money laundering, were brought in March. The move comes days after the former leader refused to continue reporting to police after being put under house arrest. Aziz ruled the conservative West African state from 2008 to mid-2019, when he was succeeded by his former right-hand man and ex-defence minister Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani. Aziz joined a small opposition party, Ribat National, in April in an attempt to salvage his political career after being expelled from the ruling Union for the Republic (UPR) party, which he founded.



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