



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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UN URGING US TO LIFT THE SANCTIONS¹

UN has joined the long que of those who support the JCPOA. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appealed to US President Joe Biden’s administration to lift or waive all sanctions on Iran as agreed under a 2015 deal aimed at stopping Tehran from developing a nuclear weapon. In a report to the United Nations Security Council, Guterres also urged the United States to “extend the waivers with regard to the trade-in oil with the Islamic Republic of Iran, and fully renew waivers for nuclear non-proliferation projects”. The 15-member council will on Wednesday discuss the secretary-general’s biannual report on the implementation of a 2015 resolution that enshrines the nuclear deal between Iran, the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Russia, China and the European Union. Guterres’ appeal to Washington comes amid talks to revive the deal – known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).



MORE CUFFS THAN WRISTS²

Freedom is a concept which many Palestinians cannot even spell out correctly. A farfetched dream which may never turn into reality. Israel continues to carry out a wave of arrests of Palestinians, including children, in an effort to crush Palestinian resistance and political opposition to the occupation. In May 2021, at least 3,100 Palestinians in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and 1948 occupied territories were arrested during random and organized Israeli arrest campaigns, reported the Palestinian prisoners’ association Addameer in its report for the month. The largest proportion of those arrests, 2,000, took place within Israel’s internationally recognized Green Line boundary following mass protests against Israeli raids on Al-Aqsa Mosque, the eviction of Palestinian residents from their homes in East Jerusalem, and clashes with Israeli settlers and forces. At the beginning of May, 60 freed Palestinian prisoners, activists and politicians were targeted with 25 of those arrested transferred to administrative detention, or detention without trial.

LEAVING AT THE COST OF MANY LIVES³

After countless lives were lost in protests against illegal outposts, the settlers have finally agreed on relocating. However, one cannot ignore the sever price which was paid for this win. Tensions in the occupied West Bank reached new highs in the past months with the Evyatar settlement being one of the focal points of clashes as settlers refused to evacuate the land and Palestinians demonstrated against their presence. Several Palestinians have been killed and dozens wounded by Israeli forces supporting the illegal settlers. According to a statement on Wednesday by the Samaria Regional Council, a settlers' organization, the Israelis are due to leave by Friday following a compromise offered to them by the Israeli government. Yossi Dagan, head of the northern West Bank settlement authority, said the agreement was a necessity given "these tough times of division", Israeli media reported.



PROTESTING THROUGH ART⁵

In the war-torn places of the world, people protest to the cruelty of life in different ways. One approach in amongst the youth in Sudan is protest through art. On the exterior wall of Khartoum's morgue, a peach-colored building attached to a hospital, a spray-painted corpse-hand with green fingernails emerges from the ground. On one of the fingers is a tag with the word "missing" – a reminder of the 200 bodies that remain inside, most of them unidentified protesters shot during the 2019 revolution. The whiff of decomposing bodies lingers on the street, the result of persistent power cuts which cause the refrigerators inside to turn off daily. Next to the painting of the hand, the word "anger" is written in Arabic. The mural is just one of hundreds that have emerged on walls across Sudan's capital in the two years since the revolution. Most depict martyrs, politicians, Nubian queens, and the crimes of the former regime of Omar al-Bashir. Aljeally says that this has given people renewed hope that the country will emerge from the transition united, as a democratic state.



ANTI-GOVERNMENT PROTESTS IN SUDAN⁴

Hundreds of Sudanis citizens gathered in the streets of Sudan's capital, Khartoum, to protest against the government's incompetence. Public discontent has mounted over the reforms, backed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), that slashed subsidies on petrol and diesel, more than doubling their price. "We want the fall of the regime" and "No to [IMF] policies", shouted demonstrators who massed outside the presidential palace in Khartoum on Wednesday, a day after the IMF approved a \$2.5bn loan and debt relief deal. Sudan's military-civilian administration has sought to keep the fractured country together and rebuild links with the West since longtime leader Omar al-Bashir was removed from power by the military in 2019 amid massive anti-government demonstrations. On Tuesday, the IMF cleared Sudan to begin to seek relief on about \$56bn in debt and civilian Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok praised Sudan's people for their "patience" and "endurance".



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