

# Intelligence Digest | Middle East

25 November – 1 December 2012

---

## Headlines

- Palestinians win upgraded UN status; Israel responds with financial sanctions and plans for new East Jerusalem settlement.
  - Afghan Taliban attack US base in Jalalabad.
  - Iran planning indigenous S-300 missile system.
  - Pakistan tests nuclear-capable ballistic missile.
  - Syria cluster bomb attack reportedly kills 10 children.
- 

## Afghanistan

### **Afghanistan Taliban attack US base in Jalalabad**

*BBC, 2 December:* Taliban suicide bombers have killed four Afghan soldiers and wounded Nato troops in an attack on a joint US-Afghan airbase in eastern Afghanistan.

[bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-20571640](http://bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-20571640)

### **3 killed in Uruzgan bomb blast**

*Afghanistan Times, 1 December:* Provincial officials say a suicide car bomber killed three civilians and wounded another six in Afghanistan's southern Uruzgan province.

[afghanistantimes.af/news\\_details.php?id=1760&&cid=1](http://afghanistantimes.af/news_details.php?id=1760&&cid=1)

### **6 insurgents killed in Uruzgan**

*Afghanistan Times, 30 November:* Security forces shot dead six Taliban militants in Charchino district in central Uruzgan province on Friday morning, according to authorities.

[afghanistantimes.af/news\\_details.php?id=1747&&cid=1](http://afghanistantimes.af/news_details.php?id=1747&&cid=1)



**open briefing**  
the civil society intelligence agency

### **Open Briefing**

27 Old Gloucester Street  
Bloomsbury  
London WC1N 3AX

t 020 7193 9805

[info@openbriefing.org](mailto:info@openbriefing.org)  
[www.openbriefing.org](http://www.openbriefing.org)

### **Dealer who channelled millions of dollars to Taliban arrested**

*The Telegraph, 30 November:* Haji Mohammed Qasim is accused by the United States Treasury of using his chain of money transfer shops to funnel significant funds for the Taliban commander leading operations in the province. But the Nato-led coalition has now disclosed he has been arrested in a joint operation with Afghan forces.

[telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/9713252/Afghanistan-dealer-who-channelled-millions-of-dollars-to-Taliban-arrested.html](http://telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/9713252/Afghanistan-dealer-who-channelled-millions-of-dollars-to-Taliban-arrested.html)

### **Senate backs quicker withdrawal from Afghanistan**

*AP, 30 November:* Reflecting a war-weary nation, the Senate voted overwhelmingly Thursday for an accelerated withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan after more than a decade of fighting.

[google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5g1q02ZQIPtYX5AeVJ795X2PAjkcQ?docId=87485e925d954a5f9df4047597a79320](http://google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5g1q02ZQIPtYX5AeVJ795X2PAjkcQ?docId=87485e925d954a5f9df4047597a79320)

### **Washington looking for enduring presence in Afghanistan: Panetta**

*Afghanistan Times, 29 November:* After the completion of security transition in 2014, the United States wants to have an enduring presence in Afghanistan to focus on three critical areas -- counter-terrorism, train-and-assist the Afghan army and enhance Afghan government's capabilities.

[afghanistantimes.af/news\\_details.php?id=1751&&cid=1](http://afghanistantimes.af/news_details.php?id=1751&&cid=1)

### **Drugs prime source of funding for Afghan insurgents: US Embassy**

*Afghanistan Times, 29 November:* The United States embassy on Thursday said drugs have become a major source of funding for Afghan insurgents and it would increase civic awareness to slash narcotics demand in the country.

[afghanistantimes.af/news\\_details.php?id=1739&&cid=1](http://afghanistantimes.af/news_details.php?id=1739&&cid=1)

### **Taliban commander Mullah Nazir injured in Wana suicide attack**

*Express Tribune, 29 November:* Taliban commander Mullah Nazir was wounded Thursday in a suicide attack in South Waziristan's largest town, Wana, that killed six other people.

[tribune.com.pk/story/472696/taliban-commander-maulvi-nazir-injured-in-wana-blast/](http://tribune.com.pk/story/472696/taliban-commander-maulvi-nazir-injured-in-wana-blast/)

### **Bomb blast in Uruzgan claims 10 lives**

*Afghanistan Times, 29 November:* Ten civilians were killed when a minibus hit a roadside bomb in Dihrawud district of central Uruzgan province on Thursday morning, an official said.

[afghanistantimes.af/news\\_details.php?id=1738&&cid=1](http://afghanistantimes.af/news_details.php?id=1738&&cid=1)

### **US envoy to leave Afghanistan-Pakistan post**

*Al-Jazeera, 28 November:* Marc Grossman, who took over after the death of Richard Holbrooke in 2010, will step down in December.

[aljazeera.com/news/americas/2012/11/2012112844436498663.html](http://aljazeera.com/news/americas/2012/11/2012112844436498663.html)

### **Afghan-US security pact expected next year**

*Afghanistan Times, 27 November:* The bilateral security agreement (BSA), which would supersede the current status of forces agreement with Afghanistan, is expected to be signed next year, the Pentagon said on Tuesday.

[afghanistantimes.af/news\\_details.php?id=1733&&cid=1](http://afghanistantimes.af/news_details.php?id=1733&&cid=1)

### **Afghan warlords maintain grip on power in rural provinces**

*BBC, 27 November:* In many remote, rural areas of Afghanistan - where few foreign journalists have access - it is the warlords, rather than the Taliban who hold power.

[bbc.co.uk/news/world-20516013](http://bbc.co.uk/news/world-20516013)

### **5 Afghan soldiers killed in bomb blast**

*Afghanistan Times, 27 November:* Five Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers were killed and 10 others injured during separate incidents in different parts of the country over the past 24 hours, the Afghani Ministry of Defence (MoD) said.

[afghanistantimes.af/news\\_details.php?id=1730&&cid=1](http://afghanistantimes.af/news_details.php?id=1730&&cid=1)

### **All is well after 2014: President Karzai**

*Afghanistan Times, 27 November:* President Hamid Karzai on Tuesday said that no crises were expected beyond 2014, after pull out of foreign troops from Afghanistan.

[afghanistantimes.af/news\\_details.php?id=1711&&cid=1](http://afghanistantimes.af/news_details.php?id=1711&&cid=1)

### **Taliban, smugglers encourage farmers to cultivate poppy in Uruzgan**

*Afghanistan Times, 27 November:* Taliban and smugglers are motivating farmers in Uruzgan province to cultivate poppy, official sources. Counter Narcotics Director, Hajji Mohammad Zahir told Afghanistan Times that insurgents and drug smugglers in Uruzgan province adopted different ways to encourage farmers and locals for cultivation of poppy in their fields.

[afghanistantimes.af/news\\_details.php?id=1699&&cid=1](http://afghanistantimes.af/news_details.php?id=1699&&cid=1)

### **The chequered tale of the Taliban 'boy commander'**

*BBC, 26 November:* The story of a young Taliban commander.

[bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-19634610](http://bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-19634610)

### **6 insurgents killed in Wardak operation**

*Afghanistan Times, 25 November:* Six Taliban fighters were killed in a joint operation by Afghan and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) personnel in the central province of Maidan Wardak, officials said on Sunday.

[afghanistantimes.af/news\\_details.php?id=1677&&cid=1](http://afghanistantimes.af/news_details.php?id=1677&&cid=1)

## Bahrain

### **Bahrain police break up Shiite demos**

*AFP, 1 December:* Bahraini police fired tear gas and stun bombs to break up protests overnight in Shiite-populated villages around Manama, leading to arrests and injuries, witnesses said on Saturday.

[google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jcUlvxVe56DMrzplYk2Z9ePGKlQ?docId=CNG.e005752de618c89324b5cd4777c3b725.a91](https://google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jcUlvxVe56DMrzplYk2Z9ePGKlQ?docId=CNG.e005752de618c89324b5cd4777c3b725.a91)

### **Bahrain creates panel to study unrest report**

*Al-Jazeera, 27 November:* King Hamad announces national commission to "follow up and implement" policy after Commission report on crackdown on protests.

[aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/11/201111275269122803.html](http://aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/11/201111275269122803.html)

## Iran

### **Iran: "Enemies assassinating scientists to block Iran's scientific growth"**

*FARS, 1 December:* Addressing a gathering in Tehran's Shaheed Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Lieutenant Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Brigadier General Hossein Salami lauded Iran's great scientific achievements, and noted that Iranian scientists' ability to overcome problems and surpass the world's great scientific capabilities was the main reason behind their assassination.

[english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9107123404](http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9107123404)

### **Iran sacks cyber police chief over blogger's death in custody**

*Guardian, 1 December:* Iran's top cyber police chief has been sacked over the death in custody of blogger Sattar Beheshti, according to officials in Tehran.

[guardian.co.uk/world/2012/dec/01/iran-police-sacked-blogger-death](http://guardian.co.uk/world/2012/dec/01/iran-police-sacked-blogger-death)

### **Iran planning indigenous S-300 missile system: Defence Minister**

*Press TV, 1 December:* Iran's Defense Minister Brigadier General Ahmad Vahidi says the Islamic Republic is progressing well in the process of manufacturing an air defense system similar to the Russian S-300.

[presstv.com/detail/2012/12/01/275563/iran-making-headway-on-missile-system/](http://presstv.com/detail/2012/12/01/275563/iran-making-headway-on-missile-system/)

### **Iran's Ahmadinejad gives new job to aide seen as possible heir**

*Reuters, 1 December:* Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has moved his chief of staff, seen as a potential successor and a target of criticism from hardline conservatives, to another job, according to the president's official website on Saturday.

[reuters.com/article/2012/12/01/us-iran-ahmadinejad-mashaei-idUSBRE8B00DH20121201](http://reuters.com/article/2012/12/01/us-iran-ahmadinejad-mashaei-idUSBRE8B00DH20121201)

## **Supposed Iranian Nuke Graph off; UN Still Worried**

*ABC, 1 December:* A leaked diagram suggesting that Iran is pursuing a nuclear weapon is scientifically flawed, diplomats working with the U.N. nuclear agency conceded Friday. However they insisted that it still supports suspicions that Tehran is trying to build a bomb, especially when combined with other documents that remain secret.

[abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/supposed-iranian-nuke-graph-off-worried-17850479#.ULygnXe0OSp](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/supposed-iranian-nuke-graph-off-worried-17850479#.ULygnXe0OSp)

## **Iran may quit anti-nuclear arms pact if attacked**

*Reuters, 30 November:* Any attack on Iran's nuclear facilities may lead to it withdrawing from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), a pact aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear arms, a senior Iranian official said on Friday.

[reuters.com/article/2012/11/30/nuclear-iran-npt-idUSL5E8MU7OR20121130](http://reuters.com/article/2012/11/30/nuclear-iran-npt-idUSL5E8MU7OR20121130)

## **Stray bolts blamed for Iran nuclear plant shutdown-Russia source**

*Reuters, 30 November:* A Russian-built nuclear reactor in Iran was shut down last month to limit any damage after stray bolts were found beneath the fuel cells, a Russian nuclear industry source said on Friday.

[reuters.com/article/2012/11/30/nuclear-iran-bushehr-idUSL5E8MT7YN20121130](http://reuters.com/article/2012/11/30/nuclear-iran-bushehr-idUSL5E8MT7YN20121130)

## **US Senate approves new sanctions for Iran**

*Reuters, 30 November:* The U.S. Senate resoundingly approved on Friday expanded sanctions on global trade with Iran's energy and shipping sectors, its latest effort to ratchet up economic pressure on Tehran over its nuclear program.

[reuters.com/article/2012/12/01/us-usa-iran-sanctions-vote-idUSBRE8AT0TR20121201](http://reuters.com/article/2012/12/01/us-usa-iran-sanctions-vote-idUSBRE8AT0TR20121201)

## **U.N. chief appeals for countries to take Iran dissidents**

*Reuters, 29 November:* U.N. chief Ban Ki-moon appealed on Thursday for countries to consider resettling several thousand Iranian dissidents living in Iraq who were recently moved to a former U.S. military base in Baghdad from a camp where they lived for decades.

[reuters.com/article/2012/11/30/us-iraq-iran-dissidents-un-idUSBRE8AS19N20121130](http://reuters.com/article/2012/11/30/us-iraq-iran-dissidents-un-idUSBRE8AS19N20121130)

## **Continued clean-up seen at Iranian military site tied to nuclear program**

*CNN, 29 November:* Recent satellite photos show continued activity at a controversial Iranian military site that international weapons inspectors have repeatedly been denied access to, according to a Washington-based think tank.

[security.blogs.cnn.com/2012/11/29/continued-clean-up-seen-at-iranian-military-site-tied-to-nuclear-program/](http://security.blogs.cnn.com/2012/11/29/continued-clean-up-seen-at-iranian-military-site-tied-to-nuclear-program/)

## **U.S. sets March deadline for Iran to cooperate with IAEA**

*Reuters, 29 November:* The United States effectively set a March deadline on Thursday for Iran to start cooperating in substance with a U.N. nuclear agency investigation, saying it would otherwise urge reporting the issue to the U.N. Security Council.

[reuters.com/article/2012/11/29/nuclear-iran-usa-idUSL5E8MTEZL20121129](http://reuters.com/article/2012/11/29/nuclear-iran-usa-idUSL5E8MTEZL20121129)

## **Asian buyers of Iran oil to secure US sanctions waiver extension**

*Reuters, 29 November:* Asia's top buyers of Iranian crude are likely to secure U.S. approval to continue imports from the Islamic Republic without incurring sanctions, after cutting volumes sharply in the second half of the year, according to government and trade sources.

[reuters.com/article/2012/11/30/iran-asia-idUSL3E8M96R120121130](http://reuters.com/article/2012/11/30/iran-asia-idUSL3E8M96R120121130)

## **Anti-Israel group hacks UN nuclear agency server**

*BBC, 28 November:* The UN nuclear agency has acknowledged that one of its computer servers was hacked by an anti-Israeli group. The IAEA said a previously unknown group called Parastoo had posted contact details for more than 100 nuclear experts on the group's website.

[bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20522585](http://bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20522585)

## **Iraq**

### **Iraq's 'al-Qaeda chief' arrested**

*Al-Jazeera, 1 December:* An Iraqi counter-terrorism official tells Al Jazeera that security forces have arrested the top al-Qaeda leader in Iraq and seized a list of names and locations of other operatives.

[aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/12/201212214201962755.html](http://aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/12/201212214201962755.html)

### **Death sentence for "Basra Qaeda Emir" militant**

*Aswat al-Iraq, 26 November:* Official sources disclosed that Thi Qar Criminal Court sentenced a Basra Qaeda Emir for capital punishment. The defendant acknowledged planning for the explosions made in the province against a hotel and the French Consulate, as the source added to Aswat al-Iraq.

[en.aswataliraq.info/%28S%28ju41in45mk1kibq2uyre3lyp%29%29/Default1.aspx?page=article\\_page&id=151554&l=1](http://en.aswataliraq.info/%28S%28ju41in45mk1kibq2uyre3lyp%29%29/Default1.aspx?page=article_page&id=151554&l=1)

### **Iraqi Deputy Governor Sentenced To Death for Armed Attacks**

*Al-Monitor, 30 November:* Death sentence against the deputy governor and four of his aides yesterday after they were convicted of armed attacks.

[al-monitor.com/pulse/politics/2012/11/iraqi-deputy-governor-sentenced-for-armed-attacks.html](http://al-monitor.com/pulse/politics/2012/11/iraqi-deputy-governor-sentenced-for-armed-attacks.html)

### **Deadly bomb attacks rock Iraq for a third day**

*CNN, 29 November:* At least 43 people were killed and more than 120 injured Thursday in Iraq as a series of bomb attacks ripped through the country for a third day running.

[edition.cnn.com/2012/11/29/world/meast/iraq-violence/index.html?iref=allsearch](http://edition.cnn.com/2012/11/29/world/meast/iraq-violence/index.html?iref=allsearch)

## **Iraq, Saudi Arabia begin talks on security cooperation, exchange of prisoners**

*Al-Arabiya, 28 November:* Iraq and Saudi Arabia on Wednesday resumed security cooperation talks, including discussion of a prisoners exchange deal.

[english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/28/252346.html](http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/11/28/252346.html)

## **Israel**

### **US denounces Israeli settlement plans**

*Al-Jazeera, 1 December:* US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has criticised Israel's decision to build 3,000 settler homes in East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

[aljazeera.com/news/americas/2012/12/201212145340784403.html](http://aljazeera.com/news/americas/2012/12/201212145340784403.html)

### **Israel halts Palestinian tax transfer**

*Al-Jazeera, 1 December:* Thousands of PA government salaries to be hit by move which follows Palestinians' successful bid for upgraded UN status.

[aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/12/2012122101441576517.html](http://aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/12/2012122101441576517.html)

### **Israeli politicians weigh in on Palestinian UN move**

*Jerusalem Post, 30 November:* Israeli politicians responded on Friday morning to the United Nation's decision on Thursday night to vote in favor of the recognition of Palestine as a non-member observer state.

[jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=294090](http://jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=294090)

### **Israel to build 3,000 settler homes after UN vote**

*BBC, 30 November:* Israel has authorised the construction of 3,000 more housing units in occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank, according to Israeli officials.

[bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20552391](http://bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20552391)

### **Palestinians win upgraded UN status**

*BBC, 30 November:* The UN General Assembly has voted overwhelmingly to recognise Palestine as a non-member observer state - a move strongly opposed by Israel and the US.

[bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20550864](http://bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20550864)

### **PLO official: UN recognition will bring no gains**

*Jerusalem Post, 29 November:* The Palestinians won't benefit from the upgrading of their status to non-member observer state in the UN because nothing will change on the ground, veteran PLO official Farouk Kaddoumi said on Wednesday.

[jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=293853](http://jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=293853)

### **US Senators move to cut PA aid should UN bid succeed**

*Jerusalem Post, 29 November:* Ahead of the UN General Assembly vote on Thursday to grant non-member observer status to the Palestinians, US senators on both sides of the aisle filed amendments that would cut aid to the Palestinian Authority and the United Nations, should the effort succeed.

[jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=294019](http://jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=294019)

### **Group demands UN probe IDF strikes on journalists**

*Jerusalem Post, 27 November:* The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), a Brusselsbased organization, is asking for an international inquiry into what it calls the deliberate targeting of journalists in Gaza.

[jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=293633](http://jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=293633)

### **Israeli Families Feel Economic Pinch**

*Al-Monitor, 27 November:* For the first time, a study has shown that the middle-class frustration that gave rise to social protest was justified. In the past 15 years, the salaries of young, educated families living in the center of Israel have decreased in comparison to the rest of the population. It is a chronicle of shattered dreams.

[al-monitor.com/pulse/business/2012/11/taub-report-study-work-and-make.html](http://al-monitor.com/pulse/business/2012/11/taub-report-study-work-and-make.html)

### **Longer-range Israel rocket interceptor seen ready within 3 years**

*Reuters, 26 November:* A more powerful version of the interceptor system that Israel said downed 90 percent of rockets fired by Gaza militants before a ceasefire last week should be ready for deployment within three years, an aerospace official said on Monday.

[reuters.com/article/2012/11/26/us-arms-israel-interceptor-idUSBRE8AP0MT20121126](http://reuters.com/article/2012/11/26/us-arms-israel-interceptor-idUSBRE8AP0MT20121126)

### **Israel's Barak, architect of Iran policy, leaving politics**

*Reuters, 26 November:* Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak, a leading strategist in confronting Iran over its nuclear program, said in a surprise announcement on Monday that he would leave political life after the January 22 national election.

[reuters.com/article/2012/11/26/us-israel-politics-barak-idUSBRE8AP08E20121126](http://reuters.com/article/2012/11/26/us-israel-politics-barak-idUSBRE8AP08E20121126)

## **Jordan**

### **Activists set to reignite fuel protests with Amman rally**

*Jordan Times, 29 November:* Activists say they are set to reignite nationwide fuel protests with an Amman rally on Friday as counter-protesters announced a series of "retaliatory measures".

[jordantimes.com/activists-set-to-reignite-fuel-protests-with-amman-rally](http://jordantimes.com/activists-set-to-reignite-fuel-protests-with-amman-rally)

## **Jordan in Lockdown: Protests Set to Rock Capital**

*Al-Monitor, 29 November:* Jordanians lie in wait for demonstrations, which opposition leaders have called for in the capital of Amman to end the so-called “era of absolute monarchy.”

[al-monitor.com/pulse/politics/2012/11/jordan-in-lockdown-protests-set-to-rock-capital.html](http://al-monitor.com/pulse/politics/2012/11/jordan-in-lockdown-protests-set-to-rock-capital.html)

## **Jordan foils Syria arms smuggling attempt**

*Jordan Times, 28 November:* Police announced on Wednesday the arrest of five Jordanians suspected of attempting to smuggle a large cache of weapons into neighbouring Syria.

[jordantimes.com/jordan-foils-syria-arms-smuggling-attempt](http://jordantimes.com/jordan-foils-syria-arms-smuggling-attempt)

## **Jordan secures financial assistance from Saudi Arabia**

*Jordan Times, 28 November:* Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour on Wednesday announced that Saudi Arabia has agreed to supply Jordan with \$487 million, of which \$125 million will be transferred soon.

[jordantimes.com/jordan-secures-financial-assistance-from-saudi-arabia](http://jordantimes.com/jordan-secures-financial-assistance-from-saudi-arabia)

## **Jordanian Islamists Support Return of Dissolved Parliament**

*Al-Monitor, 28 November:* Parties within the higher coordinating committee of Jordanian opposition parties said yesterday [Nov. 27] that they are shuffling their cards and working to solve their internal issues and confront the current political challenge.

[al-monitor.com/pulse/politics/2012/11/jordanian-islamists-support-return-of-dissolved-parliament.html](http://al-monitor.com/pulse/politics/2012/11/jordanian-islamists-support-return-of-dissolved-parliament.html)

## **Opposition coalition announces Friday march to Interior Ministry Circle**

*Jordan Times, 28 November:* The National Front for Reform (NFR) on Wednesday announced arrangements for its Friday march under the slogan “Popular uprising for reform”, noting it made preparations to ensure the security and legality of the event.

[jordantimes.com/opposition-coalition-announces-friday-march-to-interior-ministry-circle](http://jordantimes.com/opposition-coalition-announces-friday-march-to-interior-ministry-circle)

## **King calls for UN contingency plan for Syrian refugees**

*Jordan Times, 26 November:* King Abdullah on Monday stressed the need for the UN to have a contingency plan for dealing with the issue of refugees in case the situation in Syria deteriorates further.

[jordantimes.com/king-calls-for-un-contingency-plan-for-syrian-refugee](http://jordantimes.com/king-calls-for-un-contingency-plan-for-syrian-refugee)

## **Kuwait**

### **Protest fails to leave much impact on NA elections**

*Kuwait Times, 1 December:* Elections passed off smoothly amidst an atmosphere of calmness with Kuwaitis above the age of 21, men and women, trudging to the polling venue from 8am onwards yesterday. Polling stations across the country registered about 25 per cent balloting on an average in the early hours. The percentage varied from one district to another. Even within the same district, different areas registered a various voting patterns.

[news.kuwaittimes.net/2012/12/02/protest-fails-to-leave-much-impact-on-na-elections/](http://news.kuwaittimes.net/2012/12/02/protest-fails-to-leave-much-impact-on-na-elections/)

### **Kuwait votes for parliament amid boycott calls**

*BBC, 1 December:* Kuwaitis have been casting their votes for the second time this year, in elections for a new parliament amid growing unrest.

[bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20558824](http://bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20558824)

### **Kuwait election: Opposition hails boycott as turnout falls**

*BBC, 1 December:* Opposition groups say their demand for a boycott of Kuwait's parliamentary election has been a success and called the new chamber unconstitutional.

[bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20571958](http://bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20571958)

## Lebanon

### **Israeli unit crosses technical fence near Ghajar**

*Daily Star, 29 November:* An Israeli unit crossed the technical fence with Lebanon Wednesday and began installing fortifications, prompting a heavy deployment of Lebanese Army soldiers and peacekeepers on the Lebanese side of the border.

[dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2012/Nov-29/196479-israeli-unit-crosses-technical-fence-near-ghajar.ashx](http://dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2012/Nov-29/196479-israeli-unit-crosses-technical-fence-near-ghajar.ashx)

### **Syrians arrested in Lebanon with explosives**

*BBC, 24 November:* Five Syrians possessing explosives have been arrested in Lebanon, the Lebanese army has said.

[bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20477874](http://bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20477874)

## Oman

Nothing significant to report.

## Pakistan

### **Islamabad to release more Taliban prisoners**

*Afghanistan Times, 30 November:* Pakistan has assured to release more Taliban prisoners held in its jails following the request made by Afghanistan authorities on Friday.

[afghanistantimes.af/news\\_details.php?id=1766&&cid=1](http://afghanistantimes.af/news_details.php?id=1766&&cid=1)

### **US drone attack kills two suspected militants in South Waziristan**

*Dawn, 29 November:* Two suspected militants killed in a US drone attack inside Pakistan's South Waziristan tribal region.

[dawn.com/2012/11/29/us-drone-attack-kills-two-suspected-militants-in-south-waziristna/](http://dawn.com/2012/11/29/us-drone-attack-kills-two-suspected-militants-in-south-waziristna/)

## **Pakistan tests nuclear-capable ballistic missile**

*Reuters, 28 November:* Pakistan successfully test-fired a nuclear-capable ballistic missile on Wednesday that can hit targets up to 1,300 km (807 miles) away, the military said.

[reuters.com/article/2012/11/28/us-pakistan-missile-idUSBRE8AR08X20121128](https://www.reuters.com/article/2012/11/28/us-pakistan-missile-idUSBRE8AR08X20121128)

## **Second Pakistan bomb targets Dera Ismail Khan**

*BBC, 25 November:* Five people were killed and dozens more wounded when a bomb exploded near a Shia Muslim procession in north-west Pakistan.

[bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-20484125](http://bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-20484125)

## **Pakistan militant leader Mullah Nazir injured in blast**

*BBC, 29 November:* Senior Pakistani militant leader Mullah Nazir has been wounded in a suspected suicide bombing in the tribal area of South Waziristan, officials say.

[bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-20537419](http://bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-20537419)

## **Five killed in attack on Pakistan Shi'ite gathering, 90 hurt**

*Reuters, 25 November:* A bomb killed at least five people and wounded 90 near a Shi'ite procession in Pakistan on Sunday, police said, as the government struggles to stop a wave of attacks by sectarian Sunni militant groups determined to wipe out the minority sect and seize power.

[reuters.com/article/2012/11/25/us-pakistan-shiites-violence-idUSBRE8AN09I20121125](https://www.reuters.com/article/2012/11/25/us-pakistan-shiites-violence-idUSBRE8AN09I20121125)

## **Saudi Arabia**

### **Saudi Arabia looking to buy German armored vehicles**

*Reuters, 1 December:* Saudi Arabia wants to buy several hundred armored fighting vehicles from Germany, a news magazine reported on Sunday, adding Angela Merkel had considered the request with the Federal Security Committee but deferred a decision to next year.

[reuters.com/article/2012/12/02/us-germany-saudi-arms-idUSBRE8B109P20121202](https://www.reuters.com/article/2012/12/02/us-germany-saudi-arms-idUSBRE8B109P20121202)

## **Syria**

### **'Fierce clashes' near Damascus airport**

*BBC, 29 November:* The road to the airport in the Syrian capital Damascus has been closed and flights cancelled amid reports of fierce clashes with rebels in the area.

[bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20547799](http://bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20547799)

### **Twin bomb blasts shake Damascus suburb**

*BBC, 28 November:* At least 34 people are reported to have been killed and many injured by two car bomb explosions in a south-eastern district of Syria's capital, Damascus.

[bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20523039](http://bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20523039)

## **Syria launches air strikes as combat rages in Damascus**

*Reuters, 27 November:* Syrian war planes attacked towns in the country's north and east and killed at least five civilians in a strike on an olive oil press as fighting raged in the capital Damascus on Tuesday, opposition activists said.

[reuters.com/article/2012/11/27/syria-crisis-idUSL5E8MR38W20121127](https://www.reuters.com/article/2012/11/27/syria-crisis-idUSL5E8MR38W20121127)

## **Syria cluster bomb attack 'kills 10 children'**

*BBC, 26 November:* Activists in Syria say a government jet has dropped a cluster bomb on a playground, leaving 10 children dead. Video posted on the internet showed children's bodies on the ground with their mothers grieving over them.

[bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20491697](http://bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20491697)

## **Syrian forces bombard strategic rebel-held town**

*Al-Jazeera, 26 November:* Incessant shelling has left the strategic town of Maarat al-Numan in ruins, forcing many of the 150,000 residents to flee.

[aljazeera.com/video/middleeast/2012/11/20121126155755269939.html](http://aljazeera.com/video/middleeast/2012/11/20121126155755269939.html)

## **NATO missiles not for Syria no-fly zone: Turkish military**

*Reuters, 26 November:* NATO surface-to-air missiles due to be stationed near Turkey's border with Syria will only be used to protect Turkish territory and not to establish a no-fly zone within Syria, the Turkish military said on Monday.

[reuters.com/article/2012/11/26/us-syria-crisis-turkey-patriot-idUSBRE8AP0BA20121126](https://www.reuters.com/article/2012/11/26/us-syria-crisis-turkey-patriot-idUSBRE8AP0BA20121126)

## **Turkey-Syria standoff: Patriot missiles prepared, Kurdish fighters on the border**

*Russia Today, 24 November:* Syria has lashed out at Turkey's "provocative" request to deploy NATO surface-to-air missiles on the countries' shared border. The batteries may be installed in a matter of weeks, in a build-up that could further flare tensions in the turbulent zone.

[rt.com/news/syria-patriot-kurds-border-474/](http://rt.com/news/syria-patriot-kurds-border-474/)

## **Syria "firing mortars to stop refugees:" U.N. aid chief**

*Reuters, 24 November:* The United Nations humanitarian chief accused Syria on Tuesday of firing mortar bombs near the border with Jordan to prevent refugees from fleeing a civil war that she says is "getting worse day by day".

[reuters.com/article/2012/11/27/us-syria-crisis-amos-idUSBRE8AQ0VP20121127](https://www.reuters.com/article/2012/11/27/us-syria-crisis-amos-idUSBRE8AQ0VP20121127)

## **UAE**

### **UAE to Ship Arms to Jordan to Help Amman Suppress Popular Protests**

*Fars, 26 November:* The United Arab Emirates (UAE) will dispatch military aid shipments to Jordan this week to help that country suppress popular uprisings, media reports disclosed on Monday.

[english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9107122060](http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9107122060)

## Yemen

### **Yemeni army attacks tribesmen suspected of blowing up pipeline**

*Reuters, 2 December:* The Yemeni army launched a major assault on Sunday on tribesmen suspected of repeatedly blowing up the main oil export pipeline and attacking power lines, officials said.

[reuters.com/article/2012/12/02/yemen-military-tribes-idUSL5E8N259I20121202](http://reuters.com/article/2012/12/02/yemen-military-tribes-idUSL5E8N259I20121202)

### **Saudi diplomat shot dead in Yemen capital Sanaa**

*BBC, 28 December:* A Saudi diplomat and his bodyguard have been shot dead in the Yemeni capital Sanaa. Gunmen opened fire on the diplomat's car, causing it to flip over, security officials said.

[bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20525954](http://bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20525954)

### **Yemen offers separatists half of seats at national talks**

*Reuters, 26 November:* Yemen's government has offered southern separatists half of the seats at a planned reconciliation conference, a top official said on Monday, in a bid to salvage a meeting deemed crucial for the success of last year's power transfer deal.

[reuters.com/article/2012/11/26/us-yemen-dialogue-idUSBRE8AP0MC20121126](http://reuters.com/article/2012/11/26/us-yemen-dialogue-idUSBRE8AP0MC20121126)

### **Three Zaidis dead, 13 injured in targeted bombing attack**

*Yemen Times, 26 November:* Three people died and 13 others were injured when a bomb exploded in Zahrat Al-Madaen Hall, where members of the Zaidi Sect were commemorating the religious anniversary of Ashora.

[yementimes.com/en/1628/news/1656/Three-Zaidis-dead-13-injured-in-targeted-bombing-attack.htm](http://yementimes.com/en/1628/news/1656/Three-Zaidis-dead-13-injured-in-targeted-bombing-attack.htm)

---

## Related issues

### **No Global Safety Net if U.S. Jumps Off the Fiscal Cliff**

*Brookings, 30 November:* This week, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) released a new forecast of the global growth for the next two years. The good news is that emerging markets might pick up slightly, but nothing to the levels seen before the global recession. The bad news is that the problems in the Eurozone area are here to stay, at least for the immediate future. As OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría put it, "The world economy is far from being out of the woods."

[brookings.edu/blogs/the-avenue/posts/2012/11/30-global-monitor-istrate?rssid=LatestFromBrookings&utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+BrookingsRSS%2Ftopfeeds%2FLatestFromBrookings+%28Latest+From+Brookings%29](http://brookings.edu/blogs/the-avenue/posts/2012/11/30-global-monitor-istrate?rssid=LatestFromBrookings&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+BrookingsRSS%2Ftopfeeds%2FLatestFromBrookings+%28Latest+From+Brookings%29)

### **War on al Qaeda is not indefinite: Pentagon lawyer**

*Reuters, 30 November:* The U.S. military campaign against al Qaeda should not be seen as a conflict without end, the Pentagon's chief lawyer said on Friday in a speech that broached a rarely discussed subject among U.S. officials.

[reuters.com/article/2012/11/30/us-usa-qaeda-johnson-idUSBRE8AT1EV20121130](http://reuters.com/article/2012/11/30/us-usa-qaeda-johnson-idUSBRE8AT1EV20121130)

### **For Obama, could 10,000 troops in Afghanistan be too many?**

*Reuters, 26 November:* President Barack Obama publicly scoffed at the idea of keeping 10,000 troops in Iraq. So could he really be persuaded to keep that many in Afghanistan after the war formally ends in 2014?

[reuters.com/article/2012/11/26/us-usa-afghanistan-idUSBRE8AP19620121126](http://reuters.com/article/2012/11/26/us-usa-afghanistan-idUSBRE8AP19620121126)

---

## Opinion and analysis

### **How Israel Lost Europe**

*Foreign Policy, 30 November:* There was never much doubt that the U.N. General Assembly would overwhelmingly vote to upgrade the Palestinian Authority to the status of nonmember state on Nov. 29. The big surprise of the event was that a number of key Western European countries did not join the United States and vote against the resolution.

[foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/11/30/how\\_israel\\_lost\\_europe](http://foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/11/30/how_israel_lost_europe)

### **Israeli Public Opinion after the November 2012 Gaza War**

*Brookings, 30 November:* Series of polls results released on Israeli opinion towards Palestine, the US, Europe and other issues.

[brookings.edu/research/presentations/2012/11/30-israel-public-opinion-telhami?rssid=LatestFromBrookings&utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+BrookingsRSS%2Ftopfeeds%2FLatestFromBrookings+%28Latest+From+Brookings%29](http://brookings.edu/research/presentations/2012/11/30-israel-public-opinion-telhami?rssid=LatestFromBrookings&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+BrookingsRSS%2Ftopfeeds%2FLatestFromBrookings+%28Latest+From+Brookings%29)

### **Israel isn't the obstacle to Middle East peace**

*Washington Post, 29 November:* In his Nov. 22 op-ed column, "Why Israel reigns supreme," Fareed Zakaria accurately set forth the "realities" of the Middle East: namely, "Israel's astonishing economic growth, its technological prowess, its military preparedness and its tight relationship with the United States have set it a league apart from its Arab adversaries." Yet in the next sentence, Mr. Zakaria repeated the oft-stated canard that "...peace between the Palestinians will come only when Israel decides that it wants to make peace.". Au contraire. How could anyone with even the slightest knowledge of the Middle East conflict blame Israel for the lack of peace in the region?

[washingtonpost.com/opinions/israel-isnt-the-obstacle-to-middle-east-peace/2012/11/29/d0fd3538-3820-11e2-9258-ac7c78d5c680\\_story.html](http://washingtonpost.com/opinions/israel-isnt-the-obstacle-to-middle-east-peace/2012/11/29/d0fd3538-3820-11e2-9258-ac7c78d5c680_story.html)

## **The Middle East: A Web Of 'Topsy-Turvy' Alliances**

*NPR, 28 November:* Writing for the *New York Review of Books* at the beginning of November, Robert Malley, the program director for the Middle East and North Africa with the International Crisis Group, and Hussein Agha gives his analysis of the current situation in the Middle East.

[npr.org/2012/11/28/166067920/the-middle-east-a-web-of-topsy-turvy-alliances](http://npr.org/2012/11/28/166067920/the-middle-east-a-web-of-topsy-turvy-alliances)

## **Qatar feels pull of new Arab world - and global stage**

*The Independent, 29 November:* Two years after the start of the Arab Spring, Qatar's carefully cultivated reputation as a U.S. partner — and as a neutral broker in the region — is increasingly muddled. With billions of dollars in natural gas and oil revenue, it is bankrolling a new generation of Islamists across the Middle East, raising questions about its vision for the region and whether some of its policies are in direct conflict with U.S. interests.

[independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/qatar-feels-pull-of-new-arab-world--and-global-stage-8367578.html](http://independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/qatar-feels-pull-of-new-arab-world--and-global-stage-8367578.html)

## **Hashtag War in Gaza**

*Al-Monitor, 27 November:* For Arabs, the year 2012 might be seen as the first year where wars were waged through social media networks.

[al-monitor.com/pulse/culture/2012/11/media-war-in-gaza-conflict.html](http://al-monitor.com/pulse/culture/2012/11/media-war-in-gaza-conflict.html)

## **Economics of the Gaza Cease-Fire**

*Al-Monitor, 26 November:* The argument surrounding whether it was right to stop the operation in Gaza is taking place in terms that are ideological, military, political and more — but deals less with the economic considerations of the other side. One of the most important aspects relating to Hamas' desire and ability to maintain the cease-fire with Israel will be economic.

[al-monitor.com/pulse/business/2012/11/ceasefire-economic-growth-in-gaz.html](http://al-monitor.com/pulse/business/2012/11/ceasefire-economic-growth-in-gaz.html)

.....

These digests are disseminated free of charge for non-commercial use but please consider making a donation in support of our work if you are able to do so, [www.openbriefing.org/community/support](http://www.openbriefing.org/community/support).

Open Briefing is the world's first civil society intelligence agency; a collaborative platform for insight and analysis of key defence, security and foreign policy issues. Our international network provides open source intelligence assessments and independent security briefings, so that a better informed civil society can more effectively engage in peace and security debates and influence positive policy developments in these areas. [www.openbriefing.org](http://www.openbriefing.org)