

## Middle East & North Africa Regional Summary

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*November 15, 2011*

*While the region remained calm throughout Eid vacation, important developments are expected to take place in upcoming weeks. Most notably, **Egyptians** will cast their votes in the country's first Parliamentary elections since President Mubarak's ouster. A dispute between the the SCAF and the Muslim Brotherhood regarding the implementation of Supra-Constitutional Principles underlines the heightened tension in the country during this time.*

*Pressure on President Assad in **Syria** has substantially increased with the Arab League decision to suspend the country. While the resolution has yet to prove any tangible meaning on the ground, it seems to have stirred tensions in neighboring **Lebanon**.*

*Tensions also arose in the **Gulf**, as the IAEA report on **Iran's** nuclear program resulted in increased chatter with regard to a military strike. We assess that the emirates such as Kuwait and Bahrain will join Saudi Arabia in pursuit of crippling sanctions on the Islamic Republic, who threatens the Sunni hegemony in the region. The probability of a military strike remains low for the near-term.*

*The following report reviews the main events in the region by country, including an assessment on possible developments for the near future. The countries are presented in groups according to the risk level as assessed by Max-Security Intelligence.*

## **HIGH RISK**

### **SYRIA**

Pressure on Assad to step down increased dramatically after the Arab League voted to suspend Syria. Within the country, armed violence between the military, insurgents, and defecting soldiers is increasing, as violent crackdowns are deterring protesters from demonstrating.

- In addition to the suspension, the Arab league called on member states to withdraw their ambassadors and expand the economic sanctions on Assad's regime. Moreover, the league threatened to recognize the opposition's Syrian National Council (SNC) as a legitimate representative of the Syrian people. Out of 22 member nations, Lebanon and Yemen were the only two members to vote against the suspension, while Iraq abstained. The suspension comes after Assad failed to adhere to an Arab League-sponsored road map and remove his forces from restive protest cities.
- Following the suspension, pro Assad activists attacked several diplomatic facilities across the country. Among them Turkish and French Consulate in Latakia, and the Qatari Embassy in Damascus.
- The embassy attacks drew sharp rebukes from the Arab world and Turkey, which recalled non-essential staff from their embassies in Syria. Jordan's King Hussein has since called for Assad to step down during a television interview.
- The United States announced that its ambassador would return to Syria after leaving due to security fears.
- On November 14, Syrian forces battled insurgents and defectors near the Jordanian border in some of the heaviest fighting in the nine month conflict. Over 40 soldiers and insurgents were reported killed. Armed clashes also took place in Hama, Homs, and Deir al-Zour.
- Foreign businesses have been encountering difficulties in running their operations. The oil industry is the most affected as they suffer from delays in payments and other operational challenges. Moreover, Syrian oil exports are reporting lack of demand since the EU imposed its oil sanctions. In addition, the tourism industry and other companies associated with the regime are facing difficulties arising from the international sanctions imposed by the US and EU.
- Initial calls were made by prominent Alawite figures for President Assad to step down, most notably from his exiled uncle, Rif'at. This is a new trend, as up to this point the Alawite community showed a unified front in supporting the Syria president.

### **Assessments**

1. The suspension of Syria from the Arab League is amongst the most significant diplomatic moves to be taken against the regime since the conflict began. It remains to be seen however, if any of these nations will follow through on their pledge to cut diplomatic and economic ties with the regime.
2. We assess that should the Arab League or more of its members recognize the SNC, it would constitute a major step forward in their struggle to achieve legitimacy as a possible replacement for the Assad regime.
3. Military action in any form by NATO remains unlikely. Both the West and the Arab world remain committed to pressuring Assad through non-violent measures, while calls from Syrian opposition for such action have been limited. We assess that only a

- significant rise in the death toll, or the use of heavy airpower will pressure regional powers such as Turkey to intervene. This scenario remains unlikely.
4. Moreover, Russia may use the suspension as a means to retreat from its traditionally supportive stance with Syria. As one of the last supporters of the Moammar Gaddafi's regime in Libya, Russia may use the Arab league vote to justify a residence of support in order to keep its image as an Arab ally. The loss of support from the Russians would signify the loss of a diplomatic and economic pillar for the Assad Regime.
  5. While Lebanese and Yemeni votes against the suspension of Syrian could be explained with their domestic situation. Iraq's abstention can be attributed to Iran's attempts to appease Syrian opposition and the future leadership.
  6. The Syrian uprising is rapidly evolving into an armed conflict between government forces and armed opposition groups. The growing trend of military defections is taking effect, as opposition fighters are said to control entire neighborhoods of protest cities such as Homs. The clashes near the Jordanian border on November 14 were the result of a counter attack by insurgents who rushed to prevent the Syrian military from attacking local Bedouin.
  7. Domestic pressure on Assad is likely to grow from both the Syrian middle class inhabiting Damascus and Aleppo, and from the Syrian elite. The Sanctions imposed on the Syrian economy throughout recent months have significantly impacted the oil and tourism industries among others. As a result the Syrian economy has been shrinking, and more sectors are expected to be impacted.
  8. Recent calls for Assad to step down within the Alawite community are of great significance. This chatter, although only initial, may point that Assad's ouster – at least as an individual – is being raised as an option. It is acceptable that by doing so, the Alawites are trying to secure its future in the Sunni-dominated country; we believe however, that any future Sunni regime will be extremely unfriendly towards the small community.

### **Recommendations**

We recommend leaving the country as recommended by the US State Department and UK Foreign Ministry. If you must stay in Syria, minimize outings from your hotel, especially on Friday afternoons. Avoid crowded areas, government buildings, and refrain from using any kind of recording equipment in public. If you choose to leave Syria by land, be aware that the Syrian military is operating on all borders, posing an extremely elevated risk.

### **LIBYA**

The security situation on the ground in Libya remains tenuous, as reports of violence between factions around the western part of the country continue to surface. Despite the reports of unrest, a number of other factors suggest a slow return to normalcy.

- In Tripoli, a number of neighborhoods still witness localized gun violence, usually during the evening hours. Armed NTC fighters are still seen patrolling the streets of the Capital, manning checkpoints and conducting arrests of suspected Gaddafi-loyalists, despite orders from the NTC to redeploy and leave the city. Locals have complained of robbery by young fighters who confiscate valuable items and even vehicles in the name of the revolution.
- On November 12, factional violence erupted west of the capital, after rival militants battled for control of a military base. In Bani Walid, Sirte, and Sabha, retribution attacks by NTC fighters on perceived Gaddafi loyalists continue to stir inter-tribal tensions.

- Several regional airlines have resumed service to Tripoli, while other nations have restored their embassies. Italy's Eni oil company has announced that production from Libya's Elephant oil field has resumed for the first time since the civil war began.
- On the political front, the NTC nominated Abdurrahim El Keib, an electrical engineer for the position of Prime Minister. Since that time, Mr. El Keib has embarked on a diplomatic campaign to assure the West that Libya will not be engulfed by extremism.

### Assessments and Recommendations

1. Reconciliation remains the primary challenge to stability in post-revolution Libya. As the nationalist euphoria which followed Gaddafi's death begins to recede, old rivalries and unsettled disputes from the revolution are beginning to emerge.
2. In addition, the various factions which comprised Libya's rebel forces during the revolution have yet to be reigned in under the banner of a national army. Many of these fighters will not give up their weapons, adhering to tribal alliances out of fears for their own safety and mistrust from rival groups.
3. While Tripoli and Benghazi may be among the safest places in the country, the previous Gaddafi strongholds of Sirte, Bani Walid, and Sabha are likely to witness increasing violence between factions.
4. Lastly, a violent clash between militants and Niger troops near the Libyan border is indicative of the threat posed by Tuareg tribes who live in these areas. These tribes were known to be especially loyal to Gaddafi, and ensuring their loyalty will be a key factor in stabilizing Libya's southern oil fields and preventing arms smuggling in the area by Islamist militants.

### YEMEN

Yemeni tribesmen who have allied with government forces continue to attack al-Qaeda-linked militant installations in the country's restive southern provinces. Meanwhile, the United Nations' Envoy to Yemen, Jamal Benomar, arrived in the country for the sixth time on November 10, for a week-long visit, to pressure embattled Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh into relinquishing power in accordance with the U.N.-backed Gulf initiative to end the country's political crisis.

- In the nation's capital, Sana'a, Saleh's government forces are frequently engaged in lethal conflict with military defectors and armed tribesmen who have pledged support to Yemen's opposition. In the Arhab region, just north of the capital, Yemeni forces shelled anti-government tribal installations, killing two.
- In Taiz, Yemen's second largest city, thousands of protesters took to the street to air their grievances with regard to proposed immunity for Saleh and his family as outlined in the Gulf initiative and demanded for his prosecution. Protesters were also met by government shelling, killing as many as 15 people.

*So far, the United Nations' attempts at international diplomacy have failed to a great extent to stop the ongoing crisis. Saleh has refused multiple times to sign the Gulf initiative enacting the transfer of power. If he intends to follow through with the initiative, as he claims, there is still great potential for a stalemate: Saleh is demanding that the leaders of opposition parties - who left the country in order to garner support for their cause - will return to Yemen before signing the initiative, while the opposition leaders demand its signing before they return to the country. It is likely that Saleh is continuing to look for ways to buy time in an attempt to cement his authority in the country and perhaps show nations with great influence in this*

case, such as the United States and Saudi Arabia, that he is a necessary tool to combat the al-Qaeda linked militants in the nation's southern provinces.

## **IRAQ**

Being one-and-a-half months out from the culmination of the American troop withdrawal, unrest continues in all areas of the country, showing the slow-pace of the Iraqi security forces' progression towards the aptitude necessary to stabilize the country.

- Perhaps in an effort to stem this trend, the United States turned over control of the country's second largest airbase. At the height of the war, the airfield was the second busiest in the world, capable of handling approximately 27,500 flights per month.
- In the meantime, it looks certain that there will be no residual American training force after the December 31 deadline. Due to the breakdown of negotiations over American legal immunity status, the American military negotiated an initial brigade of 4,000 American troops to be transferred to neighboring Kuwait.
- In addition to trends towards decreased security, it appears that politics are seeing further fragmentation with an increase in applications to Baghdad's central government for regions seeking autonomy.

*The handover of the military base will provide the Iraqi military with significantly enhanced logistical advantages. The American military asserts that with increased control over the primary operating bases in the country, the Iraqi security forces will be able to better counter the mounting militancy that Iraq has recently experienced.*

*As the United States has spent significant time and money over the last decade, it is highly unlikely that the country will completely wash its hands of Iraq and the relative progress that was achieved there. It is therefore likely that the contingent of American forces transferred to Kuwait will be deployed to address any Iraqi advance towards decreased stability. Furthermore, Iraq has become increasingly susceptible to Iranian influence, and the United States will look maneuver effectively to ensure that its own influence does not wane. In what is sure to be a positive sign for the United States, the Iraqi government turned down Turkish and Iranian offers to step in as military trainers earlier this month. The refusal may signify a return to negotiations between the United States and Iraq once the troop withdrawal is complete.*

*In an effort to keep the deeply divided sectarian country united, Iraqi politicians will likely increase provincial powers to stem their desires for autonomy. The recent increase in provincial autonomy demands is putting fears into Baghdad's central government that the end result will be a weak Iraq. Politicians are concerned that while Iraq is still deeply divided along sectarian lines, increased autonomy at this point would not serve to unite the country in the long term, creating instability. Discussions with regard to the autonomy issue are expected to take place within the coming days after they were delayed for the recent Eid holiday.*

**MEDIUM RISK**

## **EGYPT**

Civil unrest gripped outlying governorates throughout Egypt, while political tension in the Capital remains high over foreign policy and domestic issues just two weeks before parliamentary elections are scheduled to take place.

- The debate over the implantation of Supra-Constitutional principles flared up again after Deputy Prime Minister El Selmy proposed the document at a conference of 500 leading political figures. Certain articles which privilege the SCAF enraged political parties across the spectrum, which have called for a million-man march to be held on November 18. The Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamists have issued an ultimatum that the march will proceed unless the document is withdrawn.
- In Cairo, the Arab League headquarters became a focal point for demonstrations as sympathizers with the Syrian reform movement attempted to pressure the regional body to take action against the Assad regime.
- Egypt continues to prepare for its first round of voting for parliamentary elections on November 28. Campaign posters can be seen on the streets in major cities, many Islamist parties attempted to utilize the Eid Al Adha holiday to garner support.
- Egypt's elections committee announced that tens of thousands of schools will be used to host polling stations on the day of elections.
- The Eid el Adha holiday was marred with violence in outlying areas in the north and south. Familial disputes near Sohag resulted in days of armed clashes, while a 6 people were killed in the northern city of Biltam in a similar incident.
- On November 10, tensions flared in the Sinai after militants attacked the natural gas pipeline near El Arish, halting gas flow to Jordan and Israel. Since that time security forces arrested the cell leader who was reportedly responsible for the attack.
- Sectarian violence gripped an Alexandria neighborhood on November 10 after Muslim residents attacked several Coptic shops, resulting in a military cordoning of the area. Cairo emerged unscathed from violence after a Coptic march commemorating the month anniversary of the October 9 'Maspiro' clashes concluded peacefully.

## Assessments

1. If the million-man march scheduled for November 18 proceeds, it will be one of the largest to take place since the rally of July 30. During that event, hundreds of thousands of Islamists converged on Tahrir Square in what was supposed to be a rally for Egyptian unity. That protest signaled the organizational strength of Egypt's Islamist parties as opposed to its secular protest groups. If these same groups move ahead with their protest on November 18, they are expected to bring at least tens of thousands into the streets in major cities.
2. Whether or not the Transitional Government concedes to the demands of the political parties will be an indicator to the SCAF's current influence in Egypt. The SCAF will only repeal the document if it truly fears the influence of parties like the Muslim Brotherhood, while a refusal to do so will serve as a measure of its true power in contemporary Egypt.
3. Political and sectarian tension in Alexandria will increase as the parliamentary elections draw nearer. This city plays host to politically active Coptic and Islamist parties, both of whom are using their religious centers for their campaigns.
4. Political parties are expected to increase their campaigning activist across the country, holding rallies and sending activists to the street to garner support. Such actions increase the potential for localized clashes between Islamist parties such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi parties, in addition to Coptic, Sufi, and Liberal parties.
5. The security situation in the Upper Nile, Nile Delta, and Sinai governorates is unlikely to improve in the short term, as the SCAF devotes its resources to maintaining order in urban centers. Over the past few months, residents of these areas have become increasingly active in protesting against corruption or mistreatment by authorities, while

family feuds in villages remain prone to wide scale violence. Rather than crackdown on such unrest by force, the government has resorted to negotiating with village elders or enlisting local militias to restore order, often to no avail.

6. The attack on the Sinai pipeline was a significant event as it was perpetrated after months of increased counter-terror activity by the Egyptian military. An attack on a strategic asset such as the pipeline sends a strong message to the Egyptian public of the limits of the SCAF's power. The sale of natural gas to Israel is long regarded as a corrupt practice of the old regime, and the pipeline attack is a favorable action in the eyes of many Egyptian, despite its crippling effect on the economy.

#### **Recommendations**

1. The downtown area, including Tahrir Square, Ramses street, the 6 October Bridge, and Talat Harb Square should be avoided on November 18. As a general rule, protests, political rallies, and sit-ins are all potential friction points and pose an incidental risk to foreigners.
2. On elections day in particular stay clear of polling stations, as they are prone to become centers for protest, possibly between rival factions.
3. As a basic security precaution, refrain from photographing or documenting protests, security forces, or government installations.
4. Travel to the Upper Nile and Sinai region is not recommended at this time due to increasing lawlessness. Intercity travel across the country is further complicated by the threat of roadblocks by local citizens at village entrances.

#### **LEBANON**

Political tension continues to rise in Lebanon, with the Syrian issue and funding for the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) causing rifts between the opposition as well as within the ruling March 8 coalition.

- Lebanon was one of two member states to vote against Syria's suspension, a move which sparked outrage amongst the Sunni-led opposition. In addition, Walid Jumblatt, a Druze faction leader and member of the ruling coalition, also increased his criticism over Lebanon's ongoing support for the Assad regime.
- After the suspension, Assad supporters demonstrated outside the Syrian Embassy in Beirut, a location which has become a focal point for protests in recent months.
- Both Hezbollah and Lebanese PM Mikati expressed their consent on putting STL funding to cabinet vote. The Hezbollah-dominated cabinet is likely to reject the funding of the UN-backed tribunal. The split on the issue of funding the STL is the source of an ongoing dispute in Lebanese politics, and considered to be the source of tensions and a possible collapse of current government.
- At the same time, international pressure on Lebanon to pay its share in funding the STL increases. As EU high rank officials stated that economic sanctions could be the outcome if Lebanon fails to pay its share in funding the UN backed tribunal.
- In addition, students supporting the March 8 coalition clashed with students loyal to Sa'ad al-Hariri at the American University of Beirut during a ceremony for the birthday of the assassinated PM, Rafiq al-Hariri. The fight was dispersed by military forces.
- In addition, opposition leader Sa'ad Hariri stated that he will be returning to Lebanon despite security concerns. Hariri has been out of the country since April 2011.
- Tripoli has witnessed a rise in both sectarian tension and civil unrest. A disagreement between two locals in Bab el-Rami neighborhood resulted in gunfire, causing security

forces to cordon off the area. The city is home to politically active Sunni and Alawite populations, each heavily connected to the conflict in neighboring Syria.

- Western sources expressed fears from a possible return of Palestinian organizations loyal to Damascus. A recent increase in inter-faction violence in various refugee camps has been blamed on their return.

#### **Assessment**

1. Lebanon's continued support of Syria was highlighted by its vote against suspension. The March 14 opposition is likely pressured by its constituency to take action against the governing coalition, and may possibly stage a boycott of parliamentary proceedings. A rift is emerging within the March 8 coalition as well, as several ministers charge that they were not consulted before making the decision.
2. The issue of funding the STL is likely to be exacerbated should Saad Hariri return to Lebanon. His return would be a significant moral boost as well as serve as a message to his opponents in Hezbollah that the opposition no-longer fears the consequences of defying them.
3. Tensions are running high between Palestinian factions due to inner divisions between those who support Assad's regime, and those who are against it. Syria played a crucial role during last decades in contributing to the more fundamentalist factions within the Palestinian community in Lebanon. The break-out of such violence can potentially affect other parts of the country.
4. Levels of security are likely to remain low in Tripoli, as tension between its Sunni and Alawite residents are high, due to the crisis in Syria. While sporadic clashes are likely to continue, Lebanese security forces are expected to contain isolated incidents.

#### **Recommendations**

1. Travel to Lebanon should be restricted to Business essential only.
2. In Beirut, avoid the vicinity of the Syrian Embassy and the southern neighborhoods of the city which are known Hezbollah strongholds.
3. Exercise caution when traveling to Tripoli as the tension between factions is high and there is a constant threat of violent clashes.
4. Do not travel to the area south of the Litani River or the Israeli border, and avoid traveling to the Syria border region.
5. Do not enter any Palestinian refugee camps, as they are prone to inter-factional fighting.
6. If traveling to Lebanon, please contact Max-Security for itinerary based support.

#### **BAHRAIN**

Shiite protesters continued to demonstrate in various locations throughout Bahrain, both during the day as well as in form of nightly marches. The Bahraini security forces are still forcibly dispersing all large gatherings.

- The February 14 movement launched another anti-government campaign dubbed 'Dawn of Freedom' on November 1. The campaign incorporated several roadblocks and resulted in the freeing of the imprisoned Teachers Union leader.
- On November 2, more than 200 dismissed workers from Aluminum Bahrain (Alba) protested outside the company gate calling for their reinstatement. Aluminum Bahrain (Alba) has fired hundreds of Shiite workers following the anti-government protests during February.
- Large crowds gathered in the village of Daih on November 4 for the funeral of the father of the second in command for the oppositional el-Wefaq party. The 78 year-old man was

allegedly killed by Bahraini security forces during a protest. Crowds that had gathered after the funeral subsequently tried to enter Pearl Square. Here they were stopped with violence by the security forces.

- Following the funeral in Daih, demonstrations continued to occur daily. Makeshift roadblocks have continued during the beginning of November and have caused traffic jams in Manama's outlying areas.
- Unrest has manifested daily in the villages of al-Diraz, al-Daih, Sanabis, Nabi-Salah, Jidhafs, Karzakkan and Sitrah area. Demonstrations have mainly taken place during evenings and have been targeted by tear gas and rubber bullets fired by the security forces. In response, Bahraini law enforcement has periodically closed off many Shiite villages preventing entry and exit.
- On Wednesday November 9, the well-known poet and media professional Jaafar AlAlawy was arrested in his home in the village of Buri. The arrest caused an outcry not only in the Shiite community, but also amongst human right groups.
- A terror cell allegedly connected to Iran was arrested in Qatar on November 12. Authorities in Bahrain said the cell was planning an attack inside Bahrain targeting the Bahraini Minister of Interior as well as Saudi interests. The Sunni led Bahraini leadership often claim that the Shiite majority in Bahrain has connection to Iran. Iran is still denying any involvement in the plot.

#### **Assessments**

1. The demonstrations by the Shiite majority are likely to continue while being restricted mainly to the Shiite villages in the outskirts of Manama. Attempts to march towards the Pearl Square are highly likely to be thwarted forcibly by the security forces.
2. Demonstrations in form of road blocks have become a popular way for the Shiite protesters to show discontent peacefully. Makeshift roadblocks will continue to cause sporadic traffic jams in the outskirts of the capital.
3. The report by Bahrain's Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) is expected to be published on November 23. The committee was appointed by the king to probe the events of February and March, when 35 protesters were killed by the hands of the security forces. Unrest can be expected prior to this day, starting November 19 with planned road blocking. These actions are expected to culminate on November 23, which was also dubbed 'the black day of anger'.
4. This campaign is intended to include Manama's diplomatic district as well as the financial area, however security apparatus will probably take extensive preventive measures, such as arrests, to insure that these areas will remain unaffected. Still, heavy traffic and the break-out of demonstrations could not be ruled out at this point.
5. While appointed by the Bahraini King, the BICI report is likely to only attribute minor criticism towards the Bahraini regime, further upsetting the Shiite majority in the country.
6. The arrest of alleged Iranian-linked terrorists in Qatar is not likely to affect daily life in Bahrain. Any possible terror plot would moreover be likely to target officials rather than civilians. Bahraini officials might instead use the arrest as excuse to legitimize further crackdowns on Shiite protesters. Putting the blame on Iran was highly expected, as Bahraini and Saudi leaderships have long claimed that Iran is trying to undermine their rule.

#### **Recommendations**

1. Travel to Manama and Bahrain can continue as normal while avoiding Shiite neighborhoods and all acts of protest.
2. Planned road blocks by protesters are likely to continue throughout November and are likely to cause sporadically heavy traffic jams, predominately during the morning and afternoon rush hours. Allow for added travel time, particularly on November 19-23.
3. Please be advised that the acts of protest are especially prone to take place during Saturdays.
4. Avoid protests and friction points at all costs. Westerns are not likely to be directly targeted by demonstrators; however clashes with security forces and may pose an incidental risk for foreigners.
5. Do not document any demonstrations, traffic disruptions, checkpoints or security personnel.
6. Stay alert for Max-Security reporting during the protest campaign during 19-23 of November.

## **ISRAEL AND PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES**

Over the past two weeks, the media and populace in Israel occupied themselves with the possibility of a military strike on Iranian nuclear sites. The issue was brought up even more intensely following the the IAEA report, which suggested that the Islamic Republic is in search of nuclear weapon.

- While cabinet ministers vowed to remove the sensitive question from public agenda, the opposition accused PM Netanyahu and Defense Minister Barak of leaking reports to the media in the first place.
- Meanwhile, the Israeli military conducted several high profile military exercises, which included long range war games over Italy, and the test firing of a ballistic missile over the Mediterranean. British media reported on November 2 that several high-level meetings took place between British military leaders and their Israeli counterparts, possibly discussing a strike on Iran.
- In addition, the Israeli Home Front Command conducted a drill simulating a rocket attack on central Israel. The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) asserted that the drill was planned in advance and is not related to the recent debate over Iran's nuclear program.

Issues with regard to the Palestinian front also surfaced during the last two weeks:

- Sporadic rocket firing into southern Israel from the Gaza Strip continued in the first days of the month. A cease-fire was reportedly brokered by the Egyptian intelligence, who cautioned Palestinian factions that further aggression towards Israel will likely result in military operations within the Gaza Strip. An IDF force was attacked on the northern border of the Gaza Strip on November 6, in which two Palestinians were killed.
- Calm has been upheld in the area since then, to be once again violated on November 14, when a Kasam rocket exploded in Israel's southern district. No casualties or damage were reported in this incident. The IDF retaliated by targeting a 'terror-related' facility in the Gaza Strip, killing one.
- As the UN Security Council was unsuccessful in reaching a decision with regard to a Palestinian State, the issue will likely be transferred to the General Assembly. The international body is expected to vote in-favor of upgrading the Palestinian Authority's status into a 'non-member state'.
- On November 8, the United States decided to unfreeze \$200 million originally marked for the Palestinian Authority's security apparatus.

Civil issues which engaged the country included the threat of a general labor strike which failed to materialize, and continued condemnations of 'price-tag' attacks against Palestinians:

- The Labor court has limited an open-ended general strike that was slated to take place on November 7. The Labor Union and the Ministry of Finance were ordered to continue negotiating over the issue of reducing the number of contractor workers. They are scheduled to report their progress to the court on November 17.
- Two 'price-tag' attacks were perpetrated in the second week of November. On November 10, 15 Arab gravestones were defaced with graffiti in an act allegedly committed by Jewish extremists; three days earlier derogatory expressions were sprayed outside the house of a left-wing activist. These actions were strongly condemned by government officials and opposition members as Israel marked the 16-year anniversary of the assassination of former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.
- On November 14, some 250 resident doctors did not show up for work in public hospitals in Israel's central district. The move comes as the court-ordered 14 day period to negotiate a deal between the residents and the Treasury comes to an end. The issue is expected to be discussed in the Supreme Court over the next days, where a final decision will be taken. Based on previous recommendations, it is highly likely that the court will eventually legalize the residents' intention to resign. In this case, resignations will be gradual, but will deal a harsh blow to the Israeli medical system in the long term.

#### **Assessments: military strike on Iran**

1. We assess that there is low probability for an Israeli military strike on Iranian nuclear facilities in the near-term. It appears that the Israelis hinted towards a military strike as the IAEA released its report in order to pressure the international community to take more punitive actions against Iran.
2. Claims have also surfaced that Netanyahu and Barak brought the issue into the center of public discourse in order to avoid deep cuts to the IDF budget. Cuts to military and defense spending were common demands of the social justice movement that recently swept through the country.
3. While ballistic missile tests and Israeli-NATO war games attract high media coverage, Israel frequently holds such long range air force exercises. Therefore, the recent exercises are not likely connected to any decision with regard to a strike on Iran.
4. From a military standpoint, a conventional military strike by Israel alone would be insufficient to disrupt the Iranian nuclear program. As Iran's nuclear facilities span the country, and are deep underground, a successful strike would require the assistance of the United States and other Western allies.

#### **Assessments: The Palestinian front**

5. Islamic Jihad's continued hostility is indicative of a larger effort to provoke Israel into an escalated response. The Islamic Jihad is closely linked to Iran, and therefore possible instruction from the Islamic Republic to inflame the region should not be ruled out. Iran's efforts in this case may likely be in an attempt to divert the attention of the international community away from the issues surrounding its nuclear program.
6. At any rate, we believe that the risk for an escalation will become increasingly higher after the second phase of the prisoner exchange between Israel and Hamas - scheduled to be complete in December.
7. The Palestinian Authority appears to have made a strategic decision to avoid violence at this point and continue with diplomatic efforts in the UN. They are highly likely to re-address the Security Council in the future, even if their first attempt at recognition fails.

**Assessments: Civil issues**

8. In the event that the Labor Union and the Israeli treasury will be unable to reach a compromise, an additional strike will be subjected to another Labor Court ruling.
9. The wide condemnation of 'price-tag' attacks cannot cover for what seems as the inefficiency of Israel's internal security services to arrest and try those responsible. Price-tag attacks have shown their potential to spark demonstrations and/or riots, especially in the West Bank and Arab-Israeli villages.
10. Overall, Netanyahu's government remains stable, despite a series of recent bills being passed in first reading in the Parliament, which critics say pose a 'danger to democracy'. It is our assessment that recent chatter on Iran works in favor of the ruling-coalition's solidity.

**Recommendations**

1. Normal travel to Israel can continue.
2. As a general rule, practice caution and alertness when traveling to cities in the south of Israel, including Beer Sheva, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gan Yavne, Kiryat Malachi, Kiryat Gat, Gedera, Netivot and Ofakim. In case you hear a siren, seek shelter in a protected area for at least 20 minutes after the siren is heard.
3. When traveling in the West Bank, be sure to follow the orders of security personnel, especially in the vicinity of checkpoints
4. Follow local media coverage and Max-Security alerts regarding the possibility of a general labor strike within the next two weeks.

**TUNISIA**

Post-election politics took center stage in Tunisia as the dominant Ennahda party entered into negotiations with possible coalition partners. The party struggled to assuage fears that women's rights in Tunisia would not be upheld in the future government, after a prominent female party official criticized single-parent families as unnatural. On November 10, Ennahda officials expressed optimism that a coalition would be form within days, most likely with the liberal Ettakatol and Congress for the Republic (CPR) parties. Meanwhile in Tunis, several embassy demonstrations took place. Anti-SCAF protests took place outside of the Egyptian Embassy, while secularists demonstrated outside the Qatari Embassy against that country's perceived funding of Islamist parties.

*Tunisia's election period has taken place without major unrest incident, and it appears that the three most powerful parties are headed for an agreement with regards to the new cabinet, while the President is expected to settle remaining disputes. For the time being, the Ennahda seems determined to calm fears of a slide to conservative Islamist rule, a move that will continue to prevent mass protests by Tunisia's secularists. In the medium term, deliberations over the constitution within the National Constituent Assembly (NCA) over the next year may foment demonstrations. Tunisia's outlying southern and western governorates are still relatively unstable, just weeks after clashes in the city of Sidi Bouzid over the election's outcomes resulted in widespread property damage.*

**LOW RISK**

**TURKEY**

Operations against various Kurdish opposition factions continued throughout the country during the first half of November, while Turkey's assertive foreign policy towards Syria was balanced by efforts to calm tensions against a strike on Iran.

- On November 1, several prominent Kurdish activists were sentenced for alleged participation in terror activity. Those who were sentenced were rounded up in a large security operation which targeted the Union of Communities in Kurdistan (KCK), an organization which is charged as the civilian body of the PKK militant group. A prominent professor, author, and several BDP politicians were among those arrested.
- The arrests have caused a rift between the PKK and the BDP, Turkey's largest opposition party which is sympathetic to Kurdish autonomy. The PKK is accusing the BDP of being silent while Kurdish activists are being arrested, and continuing to negotiate with the ruling AKP party on issues such as the drafting of a new constitution.
- In his efforts to suppress the PKK, Prime Minister Erdogan embarked on a diplomatic campaign in Europe and the region to stifle foreign support for the outlawed separatist group. Talks were held with Kurdish leaders in Iraq, while Turkey and Iran agreed in a joint statement to fight Kurdish separatists in their respective territories.
- Reports from the southeastern Turkey suggest that military operations against Kurdish militants have decreased, although bombing raids were reported in Northern Iraq.
- Despite the decrease, Kurdish militants carried out several attacks in the southeast, while a ferry was hijacked in the Marmara Sea by a lone attacker. Turkish Special Forces succeeded in ending the standoff without casualties, except for the hijacker who was shot dead.
- Tension with Syria increased after rioters attacked Turkish diplomatic missions following the Arab League's move to suspend the country for its crackdown on the opposition. Turkey has filed a complaint and evacuated non-essential staff from embassies out of fears for their safety.
- Turkey voiced its opposition to a possible military strike on the Iranian Nuclear program after the IAEA released its report suggesting that the Islamic Republic was attempting to develop atomic weapons.
- For recent developments on Turkey-Cyprus relations see [Cyprus](#) section below (P. 19).

## Assessments

1. The ferry hijacking does not necessarily imply that the PKK organization has shifted its tactics to target civilians. While the perpetrator was himself a PKK operative in the past, he may have acted alone or part of a splinter faction such as the Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (TAK).
2. The PKK has switched its tactics in past years to concentrate on military targets in Kurdish areas, out of fears of losing public support. Since that time, extremist offshoots have emerged which have continued target civilians in Turkish urban centers. Regardless of the motive, the ferry attack itself has succeeded in returning the spotlight to the Kurdish issue in Turkey.
3. While the winter season will hinder the activity of both the Turkish military and the PKK, militants from various factions will likely continue in their attempts to stage attacks in the southeast as well as in Turkish urban centers.
4. The KCK arrests in Istanbul have raised tensions considerably in that city. Kurdish youth are growing increasingly disillusioned with the Kurdish political leadership for continuing to cooperate with the Turkish Government; just weeks after the BDP ended a boycott of parliamentary proceedings for the same reasons.
5. We assess that the Kurdish issue remains the primary concern of the Erdogan Government, and such concerns are evident in his foreign policy. The Turkish government understands the importance of regional cooperation in stopping the PKK, what may explain the calls for cooperation with Iran and the condemning of a possible

military campaign. Turkey's critical stance towards Syria is further exacerbated by its beliefs that the Assad regime is once again supporting Kurdish militants. Regime change in Syria is especially favorable for Turkey as it provides an opportunity for them to influence the new government and entice it to cooperate in the war on terror.

#### **Recommendations**

1. Travel to Turkey may continue as normal.
2. Avoid travel to the southeastern provinces due to separatist activity and a recent earthquake which has disrupted local infrastructure.
3. In major cities, remain vigilant for suspicious objects in crowded areas or government installations.
4. In Istanbul, the area of Taksim Square and its surroundings should be avoided at night due an increased threat of unrest. Avoid the offices of political parties as there have been several attacks by rival factions on these buildings in recent weeks.

#### **JORDAN**

Youth groups continued to protest in Amman and elsewhere across the kingdom in demand for democratic reforms. These demonstrations were peaceful and small in number.

- On November 4, protesters gathered in front of al-Husseini Mosque in Amman, in addition to the towns of Salt and Sahab to express their criticism of the internal intelligence services.
- Marches and sit-ins were held outside mosques in the cities of Karak, Tafileh, Salt, Jerash, and Amman on November 11.
- The Syrian embassy in Amman has also become the site of ongoing protests against the Assad regime, with several small rallies held in the premises over the past two-weeks.

Reports have surfaced that the new Jordanian government has adopted a roadmap to 'contain' the recent protests from the opposition:

- According to the plan, the government will engage in dialogue with the main Islamist opposition party on possible political reforms.
- Security forces will show restraint when securing demonstrations and protests.
- Elections for municipalities, an issue which sparked major unrest in the country's outlying areas during the month of October, were postponed to an unknown date. Unconfirmed reports claimed they could be held as late as March 2012.
- Lastly, efforts will be made to solve the issue of army pensioners, who according to sources had a major role in fueling recent protests
- 14 Detainees who are followers of the conservative Salafist stream who were arrested in April 2011 after clashing with pro-government forces in Zarqa were released on November 5. The remaining 85 detainees opened a hunger strike on November 13 to pressure the government to pardon them as well.
- Small sit-ins and protests, mostly relating to labor and civil issues have taken place in Amman during the last two weeks. Most notably, employees of the 'al-Ghad' newspaper gathered to protest for the freedom of journalism, after its distribution was reportedly disrupted by local tribes.

Lastly, an attack on a gas pipeline in the Sinai Peninsula has once again cut Egypt gas shipments to Jordan, for seventh time this year. The blast took place northwest of Al Arish on November 10.

#### **Assessments and Recommendations**

1. We assess that the governmental reshuffle initiated by King Abdullah II has succeeded in calming tensions in the kingdom. The new government enjoys a relatively positive

approval rating, and the protests are likely to remain limited as long as the Islamists refrain from participating. It is our assessment that youth organizations alone do not pose a serious threat to the monarchy's stability. We believe this is the main reason behind the low turn-out of recent demonstrations.

2. The trend of gestures towards the Islamists will continue, possibly including more pardons for Salafist detainees. This 'Carrot and Stick' policy was traditionally used by the late King Hussein with regard to the country's Islamists.
3. Youth movements will likely continue to stage protests, especially on Fridays. In Amman, these protests typically take place in front of the al-Husseini mosque and until al-Nakhil Square. Stay clear of these locations during protests. In addition, avoid protests at the Syria embassy (al-Emir Hashem Bin Hussein Street).
4. Following the attack on the gas pipeline in Sinai, Jordan will have to revert to its energy reserves which sufficient for 30 days. Officials within the kingdom expressed frustration with the repeated disruptions to their energy supplies. It is highly likely that the incident was perpetrated by militant groups who oppose the sale of gas to Israel, who also receives natural gas from Egypt.
5. Travel to Jordan may continue as normal while avoiding all protests and demonstrations as a basic security measure.

### **SAUDI ARABIA**

The yearly pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia finished in November without any disturbances while the Saudis at the same time appear to be regrouping in order to tackle any possible Iranian threat.

- On November 2, Crown Prince Nayef bin Abdul Aziz stated that Saudi Arabia would do anything in its power to protect those who had travelled to the kingdom to perform pilgrimage. The statement came amidst the deportation of 100 Iranian pilgrims charged with entering the country on forged visas and threats from Iranian sponsored terror groups.
- During November 5-9 some 2.5 million Muslim pilgrims conducted annual pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia's holy cities without any disturbances.
- A group called 'Qatif people for solidarity with the forgotten prisoners' denounced an alleged military campaign in the eastern Qatif province on November 7. The group has called for the Saudi authorities to respect human rights and free 9 Shiite political prisoners who were arrested earlier this year.
- The Saudi embassy in Damascus was reportedly stormed following the decision to suspend Syria from the Arab League. Saudi Arabia was one of the leading countries to vote in favor of suspending Syria from the League.

*As the kingdom remains relatively calm on the domestic front, it is likely put much effort to prevent Iran from attaining nuclear weapons. As Iran's major Sunni counter-balance in the region, Saudi is extremely worried of a scenario in which the Shiite republic will possess nuclear weapon. In October an Iranian assassination plot targeting the Saudi ambassador to the US was discovered, and recently an additional plot targeting Saudi interests in Bahrain was exposed. As such, Saudi Arabia is likely to remain a frontrunner in the battle against Iranian armament and influence in the Gulf.*

*A second source of tension for the kingdom could be found in the neighboring Yemen, where Shiite rebels (in the north) and Sunni al-Qaeda cells (in the south) garner more power as the civil war between Saleh and his opponents continue.*

*Any calls for demonstrations by the Shiite community in Saudi Arabia are likely to be forcefully quieted by the local security forces. It is thus not likely that unrest will spread in the eastern Qatif region.*

## **QATAR**

Qatar, as opposed other countries in the region, remains relatively calm on the domestic front. On November 1 it was announced that the Shura Council for the first time will be elected as opposed to appointed, a decision which is planned to materialize in 2013. On November 13, an alleged Iranian-linked terror cell was uncovered in the country. The cell was reportedly plotting to assassinate Bahrain's Interior Minister and to bomb the Saudi embassy in Manama, as well as the King Fahd causeway linking Bahrain and Saudi-Arabia. At the same time Qatar continues to play its cards as a leading country in the region. Its prime minister, who is also the chairman of the Arab ministerial committee dealing with Syria, has lately successfully led the campaign calling for the suspension of Syria from the Arab League, what resulted in demonstrations outside the Qatari embassy in Damascus.

*The first elections for the Shura council in Qatar point towards great self-confidence of the Qatari Emir who does not appear frightened by popular uprisings as frequently witnessed in the region. With peace on the home front, Qatar is instead able to materialize political gains of the turmoil which still persists in the region. It is still early to call whether the emirate's prominent role in suspending Syria - Iran's close ally - from the Arab League, will push Qatar towards the anti-Iranian camp led by Saudi-Arabia. Over the years, Qatar has demonstrated considerable independent foreign policy, maintaining good relations with all regional players – including Israel at times. Nevertheless, Qatar's relationship with the Islamic Republic will be closely monitored in the near term, as they might cool-off to an extent.*

## **OMAN**

Sultan Qaboos bin Said al Said announced a series of noteworthy amendments to the Omani constitution this month, while addressing the critical issues of corruption and free speech. This key announcement however was overlooked to an extent, as the Sultanate experienced heavy rainfall, which was the source of flooding throughout the country, causing the deaths of at least 15 people.

- In the opening remarks of the Sultan's announcement, he emphasized the nation's Basic Laws in which, according to his words, every Omani citizen has the right to express their opinion and contribute constructive initiatives to enhance the progress of the nation's development.
- Perhaps the most significant amendment to the Basic Laws was relevant to Article 6 and matters of succession. As it currently stands, the Royal Family Council is called upon to select a successor for the Sultan. With the amendment, two civilian officials will be added to the group to assist in the selection of heir. In the case that the Council is not able to come to an agreement, the Defense Council will also assist in the effort and the group must appoint a new Sultan within three days.

*It is not surprising that the Sultan placed such emphasis on succession matters. He is increasing in age and is without a son or brother to act as heir. The fact that two civilian figures were appointed to the Council shows that the Sultan is looking to protect the interests of his subjects, of whom he currently enjoys mass esteem. In addition, it is likely that the Sultan is enacting gradual reforms in an attempt to deter the population from participating*

*in reform movements that are currently sweeping the region. To date, Oman has relatively circumvented the trend compared to its neighbors.*

### **UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

The trial against a group of bloggers accused of insulting the regime and endangering national security is expected to conclude by month's end. Pro government demonstrators have frequently been calling for the death penalty of one of the bloggers in relation to court proceedings.

Following the publication of the IAEA report on Iran's nuclear facilities, the UAE has expressed its fears over Islamic Republic's nuclear program and declared its intentions to enable a counter-balance to Iranian forces if needed. In efforts to offset the sense of threat from Iran, the US plans to arm the emirates with a considerable amount of munitions, which will allow meeting its training and security needs while enabling a counter-balance to Iranian force if needed.

*The UAE fears might stem from the fact that in the past, Iran has declared dominion over some of the emirates' islands.*

*Political activism has been dealt with harshly and swiftly in the UAE and political activity moreover is severely restricted. It is not likely that any further significant unrest will erupt as a response to the verdicts of the bloggers.*

### **KUWAIT**

On November 2, Kuwait's parliament announced that they have garnered the 25 votes needed to secure Prime Minister Sheikh Nasser Mohammad al Ahmad al Sabah's ouster. According to the opposition, the move was made due to the Prime Minister's perceived inability to solve the corruption issues at the center of Kuwaiti discourse. Kuwait's opposition followed up by requesting an official meeting with Emir Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah, the Prime Minister's uncle, to officially submit their demands and press for the removal. This came after 19 opposition members of parliament investigated the specific process necessary to ensure the desired change.

*Prime Minister Nasser has been entangled in persistent disputes with opposition members of parliament since he was appointed to his post in 2006. Cabinets under his leadership have been forced to resign six times while undergoing an innumerable amount of reshuffling, in addition to dissolving parliament on three separate occasions. These recent efforts on the part of opposition members are the results of intensified political infighting in recent weeks and months after reports laying culpability on 15 members of parliament surfaced alleging their involvement in a \$350 million bribery scandal. As these allegations include specific funds transfers made by the Prime Minister to his overseas accounts, the Emir may seek to remove his nephew from his current post to quell the opposition movement and any ensuing protest movement. Such action will not be an unprecedented one in Kuwait's, which is used to frequent reshuffling in cabinet. We assess it will not have a major affect on the over-all stability in the country.*

### **MOROCCO**

On November 12 campaigning officially began for Morocco's upcoming parliamentary elections, scheduled for November 25. Morocco's main Islamist party, the FJP, has made repeated claims that it will perform as well as its counterpart in Tunisia. The February 20 protest movement continued in its efforts to protest the parliamentary elections, holding weekly demonstrations in major cities.

*We assess that protests will continue and intensify in the period leading up to elections. Any unrest in the post election period will be determined by whether or not the public believes in foul play or corruption by the government. While the February 20 movement will continue to demonstrate regardless, FJP officials have stated that if their party does not emerge victorious as predicted, they will protest under the assumption that the elections were rigged. In any scenario, protests in the pre and post election periods will not lead to revolution like those in Tunisia or Egypt. Public support for the King in Morocco is traditionally much higher in relation to other North African nations, and general interest in the parliamentary elections is generally low.*

## **OTHER NOTABLE EVENTS**

### **IRAN**

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) released its most detailed report to date on Tuesday November 8, with regard to the Islamic Republic's nuclear program. While the report has been criticized for lacking any outright proof for Iran's intentions towards building a nuclear weapon, Western and Gulf states have become increasingly concerned over the possibility that Iran will eventually possess nuclear weapon. Most of these countries are looking to impose a new round of sanctions to pressure Iran into halting its programs or returning to negotiations amidst increased chatter over a possible military strike.

- On Wednesday November 9, Iran's foreign ministry representatives expressed their willingness to return to negotiations on the condition that it was treated on "equal footing".
- But in diverging rhetoric, the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, President Mahmud Ahmadinejad, along with senior military commanders vowed draconian repercussions if the United States or Israel mounted any attack against their country.

On November 12, an explosion at a missile-base west of Tehran killed 17 members of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guard, including one of its senior officers. The explosion was heard up to 40 km (24 miles) away.

- According to the Revolutionary Guard's spokesman, the blast was a result of an accident during a routine weapons transfer within the base. He added that the site was not used for any nuclear related activities and therefore would not have been vulnerable to a foreign attack.
- Iranian authorities confirmed the death of Brigadier General Hassan Taharani Mokahdam, who was reportedly an acclaimed researcher at Tehran University. He was the commander of the Revolutionary Guard's "Readiness Unit", which is tasked with developing long range missiles and related counter-strike measures.

On November 14, Iranian authorities claimed that a virus called 'Duku' has attacked the nation's computer systems, including those related to its nuclear program. An Iranian official said that Tehran managed to 'control' the malware, which resembles to the 'Stuxnet' worm, which attacked the Iranian computer control system back in 2010.

*The aforementioned IAEA report failed to present a timeline with regard to when Iran may be able to construct a nuclear weapon. This may have been an intentional move on the part of the agency to provide Iran with some room to soften its stance with regard to its nuclear aspirations. A timeline of such is becoming increasingly important to nations as the United*

*States, Israel and the GCC, as they look at the idea of a nuclear-armed Iran as a major threat and are looking for ways to counter its progression.*

*The United States and Israel have been putting increased pressure on the international community to institute a new round of sanctions on the Islamic Republic. It may be for this reason that there has been increased chatter with regard to a military strike. We assess a military strike in the near term is unlikely, as the US and its European allies wish to exhaust their diplomatic options before resorting to military action. European leaders in particular seem extremely disinclined towards that option.*

*Meanwhile, those nations who see true value to the cessation of Iran's nuclear program may continue to partake in smaller scale operations with the goal of delaying it. Such an operation can possibly be seen through the explosion at the missile base or the recently revealed malware. Even with Iranian denial, it cannot be ruled out that the explosion at the missile base outside of Tehran was an act of sabotage. This might be supported by the fact that the explosion was of its magnitude, suggests that high powered munitions were detonated, possibly large cruise missiles, which have more sophisticated arming devices than smaller arms. Brigadier General Makahdam is the latest major player in Iran's nuclear program to have been killed either incidentally or deliberately, suggesting the blast may have been part of a continued campaign of assassinations aimed at slowing Iran's nuclear progress.*

## **CYPRUS**

The most recent round of UN sponsored reunification talks between Greek and Turkish Cypriots concluded in New York on November 1. United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon conveyed his strong expectations with regard to a reunification deal by January 2012. Ban has been assured by the leaders of the two parts of the island that they will be able to finalize a deal within that time. However, while external relations look to be improving, Cyprus is currently suffering from domestic economic doldrums that may force the European Union to impose fines for Cyprus' failure to sufficiently take action.

*A reunification deal by January 2012 will likely have great reverberations. Turkey does not recognize the Greek-administered Republic of Cyprus, and has therefore expressed its intention to freeze relations with the European Union if the island nation takes over the EU's rotating presidency in 2012. Turkey has taken a series of harsh stances against the Republic, mostly due to the recent natural gas explorations taking place off of the island's southern coast. Turkey believes that any benefits from the exploitation of found resources must be shared with the breakaway Turkish-Cypriot territory. A finalized deal to the Cyprus problem would effectively put an end to Turkish grievances while also ending a large source of tension surrounding Cyprus' membership within the EU. It is projected that the potential of energy finds currently being explored would guarantee benefits to Cyprus' economy overnight. Therefore, it is likely that Cyprus will open up new drilling sites for exploration within weeks or months, to possibly hasten the arrival of perceived benefits.*

## NOTABLE DATES FOR THE PERIOD OF NOVEMBER 16-30

Country	Description	Assessments & Recommendations
<b><u>Algeria</u></b>		
<b>November 28, 1996</b>	A referendum bans the Islamist party from participating in elections	Reprisal attacks likley in the vicinity of governmental installations or the ruling party offices
<b><u>Bahrain</u></b>		
<b>November 19-23, 2011</b>	The opposition plans various protests nationwide. The fact-finding committee for the events of February-March will be submitted on the 23 of November	Clashes with security forces are likley to take place across the nation, particularly in Shiite villages. All protests and roadblocks should be avoided. Follow Max-Security reporting on the relevant days regarding the situation in Central Manama
<b><u>Egypt</u></b>		
<b>November 18, 2011</b>	The Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist factions called for a million-man protest against the government's intention to adopt Supra-Constitutional principles.	Tahrir Square and other centers of protest should be avoided as a high turnout is expected.
<b>November 28, 2011</b>	First round of parliamentary elections. These would be the first elections after President Mubarak's ouster	Polling stations, political rallies should be completely avoided due to credible threat of violence and unrest.
<b>November 30, 1956</b>	France, Britain forced to leave the Suez Canal after pressure from the US, USSR	Rallies celebrating what is perceived in Egypt as their first victory over Western powers can be expected in major cities. Should they materialize, avoid these rallies.
<b><u>Israel and Palestinian Territories</u></b>		
<b>November 22, 1974</b>	UN General Assembly recognizes Palestine's right to sovereignty	Rallies across the West Bank might be organized by Fatah members. These should be avoided.
<b>November 23-24 1993, 2001, 2005</b>	Prominent leaders of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad were killed by Israeli aerial attacks	Reprisal rocket firing likley, especially by the Islamic Jihad

<b>November 29, 1947</b>	The UN General Assembly passes the Partition Plan of Mandatory Palestine into two states: A Jewish state and an Arab state. The Jews accept the plan while the Arabs reject it.	In Israel no action is necessary; In the West-Bank some rallies may take place. These should be avoided.
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**Lebanon**

<b>November 16-21, 1976</b>	Syrian forces take over Beirut	Anti-Syrian protests by members of the March 14 coalition may take place; all political rallies in Lebanon should be avoided as a general rule.
<b>November 21-23, 2006</b>	Prominent Christian leader, Pierre Jumaiel was assassinated in a Beirut suburb. On November 23, some 800,000 people demonstrated against Syria's involvement in Lebanon during Jumaiel's funeral.	

**Morocco**

<b>November 20, 2011</b>	Protests on social grievances and in demand for political reforms expected in major cities	Protests should be avoided
<b>November 25, 2011</b>	Parliamentary elections will take place	Polling stations and political rallies/protests should be avoided.

**Yemen**

<b>November 28, 1967</b>	Yemen's Independence Day	Mass rallies/demonstrations should be expected in Sana'a; avoid them as they are likely to turn violent.
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**Regional**

<b>November 26-27, 2011</b>	New Islamic Year (1 <sup>st</sup> of Muharam month)	No special action is necessary
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Sincerely,  
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