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A weekly sample of news and opinions on current events from around the Middle East collected and brought to you by the Moshe Dayan Center, Tel Aviv University. [To see full article, click on title.](#)

Israel, Syria – Tariq Alhomayed: Has Makhloof's Message Gotten Through?

The action in the Golan Heights and South Lebanon commemorating the 63rd anniversary of the Palestinian Nakba is unprecedented. It is further evidence that if Syria had no security, Israel would have no security. Damascus is ready to sacrifice every last Palestinian to serve its own goals. Today we are seeing this attempt to exploit the anniversary of the Nakba. This means that Damascus decided to distract the world from its barbaric repression of the protests by turning towards the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Source: Asharq Alawsat (London), May 16, 2011

Saudi Arabia – Khalid Alnowaiser: Human Rights Issues in Saudi Arabia

Recent events in the Middle East show that a nation's stability depends on its success in dealing with the economy, integrity of the government, and human rights. The major human rights issues in Saudi Arabia involve the rights of women, youth, and foreign laborers; political and civil rights; and freedom of non-Muslims. Is the Saudi government ready and willing to make significant political decisions to advance human rights for all its citizens? A resounding "yes" is the answer that the whole world is waiting for, and it cannot come too soon.

Source: Arabnews.com (Riyadh), May 16, 2011

Palestine – Editorial: The Awakening

Sunday's deadly commemoration of the Nakba in Lebanon, Syria, and the Palestinian territories came as an added confirmation that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is entering a new and irreversible phase. Officials from both sides of the Palestinian-Israeli divide have begun to ask aloud whether the Arab awakening is rousing the Palestinians from their slumber. One sign of Palestinian awakening is the reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas. For the first time in decades, there is reason to believe that the priority of statehood can gain the precedence it deserves.

Source: Daily Star (Beirut), May 16, 2011

Iraq – Dina Al-Shibeeb: Iraqi Sunni Officers Increasingly Targeted

In a bid to stave off the Baath party's return, a new wave of killings targeting mainly Sunni officers working with the state is sweeping Iraq. While terrorist operations have declined in recent years, they still threaten Iraqis. Assassinations are alarmingly pervasive. Security officials said Shiite militias – not Al Qaeda – were behind a recent wave of assassinations of Iraqi government, police and military officials in Baghdad. The prospect of US troops leaving Iraq by the end of 2011 has raised fears among Shiites that the outlawed Baath party might return in a staged coup.

Source: Al Arabiya (Dubai), May 17, 2011

Iran – Hussein Shobokshi: The President Wants to Topple the Supreme Leader

The controversial Iranian president has made headlines again, but this time not through a provocative political address to his neighbors. This time, Ahmadinejad made the headlines because of his "cold war" with the Islamic Republic's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. Ahmadinejad's ambition has no bounds, but his frustrations and failures have accumulated. The regime is now convinced that his role has ended. During his tenure, trade exchange with his Gulf neighbors has plummeted more than 40% and his relations with most Gulf states have become endangered. There is no doubt that Ahmadinejad's political career is in its final days.

Source: Asharq Alawsat (London), May 15, 2011

Turkey – Burak Bekdil: The Nakba: Blood and Tears

PM Erdoğan recently told a US TV network that he sees Hamas as a resistance movement and not a terrorist organization. This came only a day after Hamas strongman Mahmoud Zahar said while his organization would accept a Palestinian state within 1967 borders, it would never recognize Israel. If the PM believes what he said about Hamas, he has no right to denounce Kurdish politicians as terrorists or to claim that the "will of the Kurdish people" amounts to terrorism especially when none of the Kurdish parties have produced a charter calling for the destruction of a nation and a country.

Source: Hürriyet (Istanbul), May 17, 2011

Turkey – Soner Çağaptay, Hale Arifağaoğlu: Turkey's New Constitution

Recent polls show that the incumbent Justice and Development Party (AKP) will most likely win the June 12 Turkish elections. The AKP has promised a new constitution to replace the country's outdated and illiberal 1982 text. If the AKP were to win two-thirds of the seats in parliament on June 12, it would likely write a constitution without seeking consensus with the rest of the society, making its vision for Turkey a key part of the new constitution. The AKP leadership has already suggested that it is planning to create a presidential system that would consolidate all powers in one office.

Source: Hürriyet (Istanbul), May 17, 2011

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