



Global Political Trends Center
Istanbul Kültür University

Istanbul Kültür University, Ataköy Campus,
Bakırköy, 34156, Istanbul, Turkey
Phone: (90) 212 498 44 76 | Fax: (90) 212 498 44 05
www.gpotcenter.org

Regional Updates

November 2014 | № 2



Regional Updates: Contents

Cyprus	3
Sources and further reading.	4
Egypt	5
Sources and further reading.	6
Israel-Palestine	7
Sources and further reading.	8

CYPRUS

BY DUYGU ALPAN

Marked by the suspension of the comprehensive peace negotiations on Cyprus, October was followed by critical developments not only on the island but also in the Eastern Mediterranean basin surrounding it, throughout November.



The month started with a report published by a Turkish newspaper claiming that during the last negotiations the Greek Cypriots offered the Turkish Cypriots a map, which allegedly left them only 25 per cent territory, while it is 36 per cent currently and was 29 per cent in the Annan Plan. The Greek Cypriots denied the report arguing that it was an attempt by Turkey to mislead the public, and stated, “the President has submitted nothing to the negotiations beyond the criteria that a settlement of the territorial issue must [be] based on”.

The hydrocarbon reserves offshore Cyprus have been remarkably subject to the other countries in the Eastern Mediterranean region. In the beginning of November, Israel supported the Greek Cypriots on their exploratory natural gas search in the area declaring that they respect the integrity of Cyprus and that Greek Cypriots have the right to explore this maritime zone for gas or oil reserves.

On November 8, Egypt, Greece and the Greek Cypriot side held a trilateral summit with the aim to tackle the challenges in the Eastern Mediterranean, particularly regarding the hydrocarbon reserves in the region, and to strengthen coordination and cooperation between the three countries. During the summit, the leaders stressed their respect to Greek Cypriots’ sovereign rights over its so-called Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and called on Turkey to cease its seismic survey activities in the disputed maritime zones. Likewise, the leaders featured the importance of a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Cyprus question during the summit. Yet, the Greek Cypriot side noted that the trilateral summit and cooperation agreed upon was not aimed at Turkey, but stability in the Eastern Mediterranean at large.

On November 13, the European Parliament passed a resolution condemning Turkey for its maritime survey in the area that the EU recognizes as the EEZ of the Greek Cypriot side. The resolution stated that the activities carried out by Turkey “must be seen as both illegal and provocative”. Moreover, the motion warned Turkey to stop its actions, which according to the text, undermines the continuation of comprehensive peace negotiations. In reference to the resolution, “it has no validity for us” said Turkey’s EU Minister before the vote in the Parliament, and added, “although Turkey is respectful towards the European Parliament’s decision, this resolution is likely to end up like many other resolutions”.

After the suspension of the peace negotiations, UN Special Advisor on Cyprus Espen Barth Eide proposed a twin-track process that would create an advisory panel in order to tackle the technical aspects of energy resources management in a reunified island, in parallel with the negotiations. However, the proposal was rejected by both the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots. Both sides' reasons to reject the proposal were different: the Turkish Cypriot side wanted natural gas to be subject in the peace talks while the Greek Cypriot side refused to deal with the hydrocarbons prior to a political settlement on the island. As the proposal was not welcomed by either side, "it is more the two sides that have to find a way to create the conditions that they can speak. What I am concentrating on is now what we do in order to make sure that the talks will be speedy and effective once we are back at the table" said Eide.

In a process where both sides' approaches to the hydrocarbon reserves in the comprehensive peace negotiations are fundamentally different, and where the international actor's involvement in the issue is fluctuating, it is difficult to foresee how the developments will evolve in the upcoming period.

Sources and Further Reading (click to access)

[Nov. 3, 2014 - Rumlar, Kıbrıs'ın yüzde 75'ini istiyor](#)

[Nov. 3, 2014 - Government denies submitting territory map](#)

[Nov. 3, 2014 - Nami: "Hidrokarbon kaynakları, kartlar doğru oynandığı takdirde, huzur ve güveni artıracaktır"](#)

[Nov. 5, 2014 - Israel says backs Cyprus gas exploration in east Med](#)

[Nov. 10, 2014 - Oil and gas reserves around Cyprus give Greece and Turkey more to fight about](#)

[Nov. 10, 2014 - Egypt, Greece, Greek Cypriots](#)

[Nov. 10, 2014 - Nothing illegal about Turkish ships in Cyprus EEZ, says Eide](#)

[Nov. 13, 2014 - European Parliament resolution on Cyprus EEZ](#)

[Nov. 18, 2014 - 'No' to linking gas with peace talks](#)

[Nov. 26, 2014 - Masaya Dönme Yolunu Taraflar Kendileri Bulacak](#)

[Nov. 26, 2014 - Turkey offers 'joint committee' for deadlock in Cyprus talks after 'private firm' suggestion](#)

[Nov. 29, 2014 - Intractable—or insoluble?](#)

[Nov. 29, 2014 - Eide, Kıbrıslıları uyardı](#)

[Nov. 30, 2014 - Gas and conflict don't mix](#)

EGYPT

BY OMAR SHEIRA

In Sinai, an attack led by militant group Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (ABM) during the last week of October resulted in the killing of 31 Egyptian troops, causing the Egyptian government to declare a three-month state of emergency and tighten its grip on the peninsula by creating a 500 kilometer buffer zone at the Rafah border. This decision was furthered in November, when the government announced the discovery of new underground tunnels and subsequently, its decision to double the depth of the buffer zone to 1000 kilometers. In effect, over 800 houses were bulldozed, 1,100 families displaced, and a total of \$1 billion was allocated to compensate the families, which will eventually be relocated to New Rafah, a city 5 kilometers away and still in its planning phase.



While the Egyptian armed forces intensified the military campaign against the perceived radicalist threat in Sinai, ABM swore a pledge of allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), whose leaders welcomed the move. ISIS leader Abu Musab al-Maqdisy encouraged the militants to move their battle from Sinai to Cairo, where they can target armed forces, Copts, and judges through the use of car explosives. Throughout the month, there were several attempts to plant bombs on bridges, railways, metros, and trains in Cairo, Beni Suef, and Menufiya; some of the attempts succeeded and others were uncovered prior to detonation. Additionally, in Damietta, near the Suez Canal, an Egyptian Naval vessel was ambushed by gunmen, 32 of which were arrested.

In Cairo, there were four developments. First, a call for reconciliation between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Egyptian authorities by former majority leader and member of the Shura Council, Ali Fath el-Bab, was renounced by the Brotherhood and left unaddressed by the government. Second, protests led by the Students Against Coup (SAC) at Al-Azhar University continued and descended into disorder. Students set fire to gardens and launched fireworks at security forces, who in turn, responded by making arrests and using tear gas to disperse the protests. Third, Salafist protests held on November 28 resulted in the death of three, including an army general. Finally, former President Hosni Mubarak was acquitted of all murder charges, putting an end to a controversial trial and sparking some protests.

In regional and international affairs, there were also four main developments. First, Egypt's human rights record was examined in Geneva by the UN's Universal Periodic Review's Working Group during its 20th Session. At the conclusion of the meeting, a total of 300 recommendations were issued for the Egyptian government. Second, Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi discussed the escalations of East Jerusalem with Jordan's King Abdullah II, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and US Secretary of State John Kerry. Third, bombs in Tripoli exploded near the Egyptian and United Arab Emirates embassies. Fourth, el-Sisi met with Algerian Prime Minister Abdel-Malek Sellal and agreed

to increase Egyptian-Algerian cooperation to strengthen legitimate Libyan institutions and resolve the Libyan crisis.

The Egyptian economy grew by 1.1% in its first quarter and Egyptian authorities received several delegations in November to further boost economic progress. Other economic updates include: first, an International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission visited and confirmed that while Egypt faces many challenges, its recovery comes due to the series of economic and social reforms; second, the largest US business delegation visited Egypt and vowed more investment in light of the current reforms; and finally, el-Sisi also met with an Arab business delegation to map out an Egyptian investment map.

Sources and Further Reading (click to access)

[Nov. 1, 2014 - IMF to hold consultations with Egypt on Article IV next week](#)

[Nov. 2, 2014 - No reconciliation...political parties decline normalizing with the Muslim Brotherhood](#)

[Nov. 3, 2014 - Egypt signs irrigation MoU with Netherlands](#)

[Nov. 3, 2014 - Egypt prepares for parliamentary polls](#)

[Nov. 4, 2014 - IS urges move Sinai battle to Cairo, Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis denies allegiance](#)

[Nov. 5, 2014 - Egypt, Palestinians in contact to open Rafah crossing](#)

[Nov. 8, 2014 - Egypt receives 300 human rights recommendations in Geneva](#)

[Nov 12, 2014 - US trade mission upbeat on Sisi leadership](#)

[Nov. 13, 2014 - 'Terror' attack on Egypt naval vessel leaves 8 missing](#)

[Nov. 13, 2014 - Egypt's new law could repatriate Al-Jazeera reporters](#)

[Nov. 14, 2014 - Complete visions for Egyptian-Algerian cooperation to resolve the Libyan crisis](#)

[Nov. 15, 2014 - Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis claim deadly Sinai attack](#)

[Nov. 18, 2014 - Egypt to expand Gaza buffer zone to 1km](#)

[Nov. 20, 2014 - Egyptian police arrest Brotherhood 'moderate' Mohamed Ali Bishr](#)

[Nov 24, 2014 - Al-sisi meets Arab business delegation](#)

[Nov. 29, 2014 - Deaths in Egypt anti-government protest](#)

[Nov. 30, 2014 - Mubarak verdict sparks angry reactions](#)

ISRAEL-PALESTINE

BY MUHAMMED AMMASH

As Israel commemorated Yitzhak Rabin on November 5th, the day of his assassination, the country witnessed a rapid escalation of conflict. The killing of a Palestinian citizen of Israel, Khayr al-Din al-Hamdan by Israeli police in the town of Kufr Kana resulted in a growing tension and demonstrations in the Arab populated towns in Israel. At the same time, some Jewish demands to lift the ban on the religious practices of Jews at the Noble Sanctuary/Temple Mount contributed to heightened violence in East Jerusalem. Terror attacks in Jerusalem and Israeli police's strict enforcement in Arab-populated towns have also sparked tensions between Druze and Muslim communities in Israel, resulting in furious clashes.



After the confrontation between Israeli security forces and Muslim Palestinians at the compound, Netanyahu promised Jordan's King Abdullah II that he will not yield to demands of Jews to pray at the holy site. In the trilateral meetings with PM Netanyahu and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, King Abdullah stated the need to maintain the status quo of the Holy Shrines.

The intense situation peaked over the Synagogue attack in November 18th, causing further religious anxiety. After 5 Israeli worshipers were killed by 2 Palestinian East Jerusalemites, the attackers were immediately shot dead by the Israeli police. Despite the condemnation of the synagogue incident by Palestinian President Abbas, Israel swiftly proceeded to demolish the houses of the assailants. Another incident that brought more strain was the attack on a Jewish-Arab bilingual elementary school, which is part of a wider project aiming at creating a shared society in Israel.

While EU Foreign Chief called for the recognition of Palestinian statehood after a visit to the Gaza Strip, the EU Parliament considered initiative to recognize Palestine and in that to contribute to Middle East peace. At the same time, French lawmakers debated a nonbinding motion to recognize a Palestinian state just as Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius voiced that France was working with its partners at the UN "to adopt a Security Council resolution to re-launch and conclude talks."

With regard to regional actors, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said in an interview that Egypt could send troops to a future Palestinian state in order to help stabilizing it. On the other hand, Turkey signed a memorandum of understanding with Palestine to develop an industrial zone in the northern West Bank city of Jenin.

Whereas the debates about whether or not the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is shifting towards a religious confrontation, the controversial Jewish state draft bill advanced by PM Netanyahu, and which calls

for recognizing the Jewish character of Israel, brought about disagreements among Israeli cabinet members and criticism by the U.S. The bill which considers Israel as the national homeland of the Jewish people, institutionalizes Jewish law as an inspiration for legislation, and excludes Arabic as an official language, put to the question Israel's non-Jewish population.

Sources and Further Reading (click to access)

[Nov. 7, 2014 - Israelis remember Rabin, but many reject his legacy](#)

[Nov. 7, 2014 - Jerusalem a city on edge as tensions spiral](#)

[Nov. 7, 2014 - What Palestinian media is saying about the Jerusalem violence](#)

[Nov. 8, 2014 - WATCH: Police kill would-be attacker as he runs away](#)

[Nov. 8, 2014 - EU foreign chief calls for statehood on Gaza visit](#)

[Nov. 12, 2014 - Abbas says Israel igniting 'religious war'](#)

[Nov. 13, 2014 - Remarks With Jordanian Foreign Minister Judeh After Their Meeting](#)

[Nov. 14, 2014 - Arab MKs aim to restore dialogue with Israelis](#)

[Nov. 15, 2014 - 41 injured in Druze-Muslim brawl in northern Israel](#)

[Nov. 17, 2014 - East Jerusalem under 'collective punishment'](#)

[Nov. 18, 2014 - Five Israelis killed in deadly attack on Jerusalem synagogue](#)

[Nov. 19, 2014 - Clergy, Interfaith Activists Aim To Prevent 'Religious War'](#)

[Nov. 23, 2014 - Sisi: Egypt could send forces to stabilize future Palestinian state](#)

[Nov. 23, 2014 - Coalition in turmoil after cabinet approves controversial 'Jewish state bill'](#)

[Nov. 24, 2014 - U.S. responds to 'Jewish nation-state' bill: Israel must stick to democratic principles](#)

[Nov. 25, 2014 - Abbas: 'Nation-State' for Jewish People an Obstacle to Peace](#)

[Nov. 26, 2014 - Palestinian statehood: European Parliament considers initiative to recognize Palestine and 'provide extra impetus towards Middle East peace'](#)

[Nov. 27, 2014 - Turkish plan for Jenin industrial zone moves forward](#)

[Nov. 28, 2014 - French Legislators Debate Stand on Palestinian Statehood](#)

[Nov. 29, 2014 - Fire, graffiti in the Max Rayne Jerusalem School](#)



Global Political Trends Center (GPoT Center) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research institution established under the auspices of Istanbul Kültür University in 2009.

GPoT Center was founded with the aim to support reconciliation and non-violent solutions to international as well as domestic issues through dialogue. Our mission is to contribute to stability, democratization and peace through organizing multitrack diplomacy meetings, conducting innovative and independent research, and encouraging informed debates in the media on key issues affecting Turkey and the world.

GPoT Center serves as a platform for the free exchange of views and information on political, social and economic matters concerning a variety of parties and segments of society. We aim to achieve our mission by routinely bringing together opinion leaders, government officials, policy makers, analysts, scholars, experts and members of the media from Turkey and abroad.

Our publications can be downloaded from our website for free. They are also accessible through online libraries worldwide, such as the International Relations and Security Network in Zurich, Europe's World in Brussels, and Columbia University Press in New York. Additionally, you can find our books on Google Books and Amazon Kindle.

CONTACT DETAILS

Global Political Trends Center (GPoT)

Istanbul Kültür University
Atakoy Campus, Bakirkoy
34 156 Istanbul, Turkey

www.gpotcenter.org

info@gpotcenter.org

Tel: +90 212 498 44 76/65

Fax: +90 212 498 44 05

