

ARAB DISPATCH

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North Africa

#Algeria: Despite Bouteflika's withdrawal from election, massive protests call for the immediate departure of the ailing President, as his allies start turning on him



On the 15th of March, hundreds of thousands of demonstrators gathered across Algeria for the fourth consecutive Friday, demanding the immediate end of Abdelaziz Bouteflika's rule. On the 11th of March, the surprising announcement that he would not be seeking a fifth consecutive five-year term prompted widespread celebration and was seemingly expected to appease protests. Yet, the indefinite postponement of April 18 election and his bid to remain in office until the adoption of a new constitution were largely considered as an attempt to prolong his rule. In view of the formation of a transitional, technocratic executive, the newly-appointed PM Nouredine Bedoui affirmed that his

government would last a short time and include young generations. As many citizens remain distrustful of this arrangement, senior figures in the ruling Front de Libération Nationale have started distancing themselves from the veteran politician, with former spokesman Hocine Khaldoun claiming that Bouteflika is “history now”.

To know more about this topic:

- *Le Monde*, “En Algérie, « on leur demande juste de partir, dans le calme »”, 03/16/19, available at: <https://lemde.fr/2OiD7qs>.
- *Middle East Monitor*, “Algeria PM: Transitional government to be formed next week”, 03/14/19, available at: <https://bit.ly/2HyRYvx>.
- *Al Jazeera*, “Huge protests in Algeria as allies turn on Bouteflika”, 03/16/19, available at: <https://bit.ly/2XZ8Kd2>.

Levant

#Jordan: MPs push to cut ties with Israel over alleged “aggression” at Jerusalem holy sites



On the 18th of March, Jordanian Lower House called on the government to expel the Israeli ambassador from the Kingdom in response to “ongoing aggression” at holy sites in Jerusalem, that are traditionally under the Hashemite Custodianship. This move comes soon after an Israeli Magistrates’ Court ordered the closure of Bab al-Rahma – the Gate of Mercy – within the al-Aqsa Mosque

compound, known by Jews as the Temple Mount. The site, which had been shut for sixteen years by Israel Police over alleged Hamas' militant activities there, has become a flashpoint of tensions between Israeli security forces and Palestinian worshippers in recent weeks, with the Jerusalem Waqf challenging its closure and convening prayer protests in the area. During the parliamentary session, MPs also questioned the 1994 Jordanian-Israeli Peace Treaty and demanded the intervention of the Arab League and the UN Security Council to counter Israeli legislation on the matter.

To know more about this topic:

- *France 24*, “Jordan MPs call for expulsion of Israel ambassador”, 03/18/19, available at: <https://bit.ly/2OdLPGq>.
- *The Jordan Times*, “House angered over Israeli violations in Jerusalem, ‘deal of the century’”, 03/18/19, available at : <https://bit.ly/2Y65cpi>.
- *Haaretz*, “Israeli Court orders contested Temple Mount building shut after weeks of tensions”, 03/17/19, available at: <https://bit.ly/2HwjrP4>.

Gulf

[#Saudi Arabia](#), [#Yemen](#): U.S. Senate passes a bill to halt support for Saudi-led coalition in Yemen



Last Wednesday, the U.S. Senate voted 54-46 to end Washington support for the Saudi Arabian-led coalition's war in Yemen. The passage of the bill, which was co-sponsored by Senator Bernie Sanders

and the Republican Mike Lee, marks the first time lawmakers have invoked the War Powers Act of 1973 to stop military involvement in a foreign conflict. On this occasion, Sanders called for halting “America’s complicity in a humanitarian crisis” and condemned an “irresponsible foreign policy”. The Senate action sends the resolution back to the Democratic-led House of Representatives, that is widely expected to approve it. In its statement threatening a veto, the White House reiterated the need to cooperate with Saudi- and UAE-led coalition, arguing that the resolution could undermine the fight against violent extremism.

To know more about this topic:

- *Defense News*, “Senate passes resolution to end US support of Saudi Arabia in Yemen, 54- 46”, 03/14/19, available at: <https://bit.ly/2TilajA>.
- *Middle East Eye*, “If you 'truly care' about Yemenis, support Saudi Arabia, Pompeo says”, 03/15/19, available at: <https://bit.ly/2UKOnhH>.

#ArabInsight

#Libya: The writer Jumaa Bukleb discusses the origins and prospects of the Libyan crisis



On the 17th of March, the Libyan writer and journalist Jumaa Bukleb published on the Arabic international newspaper *Asbāq al-Ansāt* an article titled “Winer, the former [U.S. Special, *ndf*] Envoy to Libya, is waking up from slumber”, where he presents his views on the sources of the country’s ongoing crisis, as well as on future prospects. In particular, the author provides an extensive

commentary on “[Origins of the Libyan conflict and options for its resolution](#)”, a February 2018 report produced by Ambassador Jonathan M. Winer, who held office between September 2013 and January 2017.

In the first place, Bukleb praises the accuracy of Winer’s analysis, agreeing with both his appraisal of the conflict’s root causes and proposals for possible solutions. As far as the first point is concerned, the article opens by defining Libya’s situation since the first civil war (2011) as one of “stable instability”, where the competition for power and resources, with no arbiter, led to a succession of increasingly weak transitional governments. In this respect, the author highlights the often-detrimental role of external actors – Arab, regional, and international – which “contributed to the protraction of the country’s plight”. Regarding the second issue, both Bukleb and Winer acknowledge that no one within Libya has the position and the will to act as a convener of a national process. According to the Ambassador’s report, the way out of the deadlock lies in international players convincing Libyans that a negotiated settlement and elections are the only viable way forward, rather than a military dictatorship, partition, or holding the shaky *status quo*. However, as Jumaa Bukleb points out, such an approach requires *all* foreign actors to “clarify their position to their local clients who reject the peace process”. As the strong man of Cyrenaica pursues his offensive in the South, the Libyan writer predicts the approaching end of “stable instability”. Yet, he places confidence in Ghassan Salamé-led UN efforts, hoping that the long-delayed Libya National Conference, set for next month, will succeed in reconciling feuding factions and pave the way to elections.

[The article is available in Arabic at the following link: <https://bit.ly/2TfvO3r>]

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