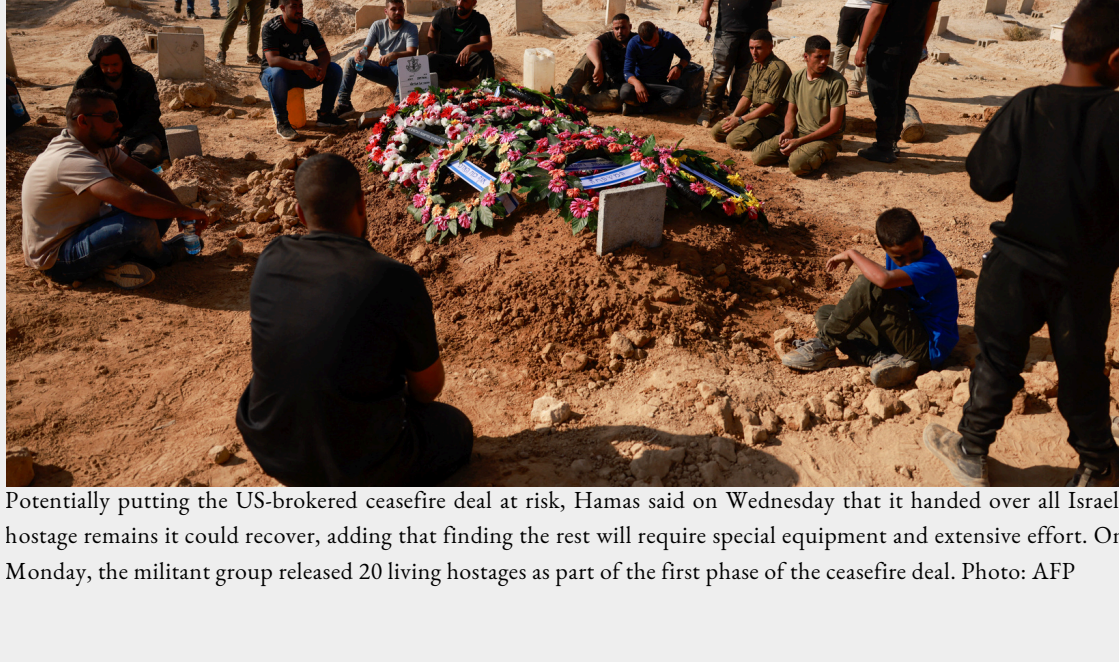


MEIWeekly.



Potentially putting the US-brokered ceasefire deal at risk, Hamas said on Wednesday that it handed over all Israeli hostage remains it could recover, adding that finding the rest will require special equipment and extensive effort. On Monday, the militant group released 20 living hostages as part of the first phase of the ceasefire deal. Photo: AFP

WHAT’S HOT: MEI PUBLICATIONS, PODCASTS, & MORE

READ: In *Heard@theSouq*, MEI analyses how Iran’s 12-Day War with Israel has led to significant social shifts—from looser enforcement of moral laws to growing public disillusionment with the regime. Read the article [here](#).

READ: MEI Perspectives examines how Syria risks slipping back into conflict and fueling regional instability despite major foreign policy gains by the country’s new rulers. Read the article [here](#).

WHAT’S NEWS: THE BIG HEADLINES THIS WEEK

Israel Threatens to Resume Fighting Over Hostages’ Bodies

Israel’s Defence Minister Israel Katz threatened on Wednesday to resume fighting if Hamas does not honour the terms of a US-backed ceasefire that halted the war in Gaza. After Israel’s threat, senior US advisors said that Hamas still intends to make good on its initial pledge.

Hamas Executes Collaborators in Gaza

On Monday, a video showed masked gunmen with green Hamas-linked headbands lining up eight captives in a crowded street and shooting them. Various reports said at least 33 people were executed across Gaza for allegedly spying for Israel or belonging to rival armed groups.



Analysts say that Hamas appears to be trying to assert that it is still the dominant force in the territory. Photo: AFP

Qatar and Saudi Arabia Qualify for 2026 Fifa World Cup

After finishing atop their respective groups in the fourth round of Asian qualifying, Doha and Riyadh clinched spots at next year’s World Cup on Tuesday. It is the first time Qatar has advanced through World Cup qualification, and will mark Saudi Arabia’s seventh appearance.

CALENDAR: MEI EVENTS

[Book Talk]: Twilight of the Saints

In less than a century, Salafism has transformed Sunni Islam. In Egypt, its influence has grown to the point of reshaping mainstream understandings of the faith. How did this once-marginal movement come to redefine mainstream Islam in Cairo? Join MEI for this thought-provoking online book talk to uncover this and more. This webinar will be conducted via Zoom from 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM (SGT) on Tuesday, 21 October 2025. To register, click [here](#).



This book talk will also examine how Salafism influenced the dynamics of the 2011 revolution and the democratic transition that ended with the army’s takeover of the country. Photo: AFP

LOOK AHEAD: WHAT TO KEEP A WATCH ON

Trump: US Ready for Deal When Tehran is

In a speech to the Israeli Parliament on Monday, US President Donald Trump said, “we are ready when you are, and it will be the best decision that Iran has ever made. It’s going to happen”, referring to a potential deal with Iran. “The hand of friendship and cooperation is open. I’m telling you, they [Iran] want to make a deal... it would be great if we could make a deal”, Mr Trump told the Israeli Knesset.



Iran’s Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi welcomed a potential “fair and balanced” US proposal on its nuclear programme, but said Tehran has not received any starting points for negotiation. Photo: AFP

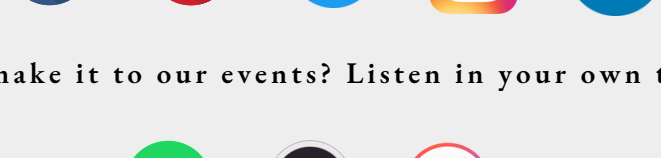
Syrian Kurdish Forces to Merge into National Army

The Syrian government and the main Kurdish-led force in the country’s northeast have agreed in principle on a plan to merge the US-backed force as a cohesive group into the national army, Syria’s main Kurdish commander Mazloum Abdi said Thursday. “We are talking about a large number, tens of thousands of soldiers, as well as thousands of internal security forces”, Mr Abdi said.



He added that they have formed a committee that will work with the Defence Minister and other military officials to specify the “suitable mechanisms”. Photo: AFP

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