

From: Terje Rod-Larsen <[REDACTED]>
To: "Jeevacation@gmail.com" <Jeevacation@gmail.com>
Subject: Fw: UNSCO Daily Press Brief, Wednesday, 16 March, 2011
Date: Wed, 16 Mar 2011 16:56:36 +0000

From: Hayat Abu Saleh <abusaleh@un.org>
To: Hayat Abu Saleh <abusaleh@un.org>
Sent: Wed Mar 16 04:38:24 2011
Subject: UNSCO Daily Press Brief, Wednesday, 16 March, 2011

UNSCO Daily Press Brief

Wednesday, 16 March, 2011

Diplomacy:

French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe said Tuesday that European Union recognition of a Palestinian state could be a "possibility that should be kept in mind." (AFP)

The government of Uruguay on Tuesday announced its official recognition of the Palestinian State as an independent and sovereign country. (Xinhua)

Palestinian Internal Affairs:

Hamas PM Ismail Haniyeh said it was time for Fatah and Hamas to meet and set aside their differences and called on Fatah leaders to begin the process of reconciliation. Fatah spokesman, Ahmed Assaf, rejected the offer later Tuesday, saying it wasn't genuine. (Al-Jazeera)

Thousands of people have attended rallies in Gaza and the West Bank to call for a national dialogue. But the day ended in scuffles in Gaza City as Hamas police shut down the main demonstration at sunset. Up to 500 "independent youths" then moved to a nearby square. Police quashed that gathering, using force and arresting dozens. (Al-Jazeera)

Palestinians demonstrating in Ramallah late Tuesday vowed to maintain their presence in a central square until the West Bank and Gaza Strip are re-united. The call came shortly after tear gas canisters briefly dispersed the crowd in Manara square. At least 20 people have been injured. (Maan News)

Gaza:

The Gaza government committee appointed to follow-up on recommendations set out by the Goldstone Commission has handed its response to the questions received from the Human Rights Council's committee of independent experts. (Maan News)

Several Israeli military troops invaded Wednesday morning agricultural lands in the east of Rafah city, southern Gaza Strip. (Palestine Telegraph)-

Medical sources in Gaza on Wednesday reported that two Palestinians were killed and four were injured Tuesday overnight in a gas pipeline explosion in a smuggling tunnel. (Jerusalem Post)

Egyptian security officials said Tuesday that Egypt's armed forces have seized five vehicles carrying weapons into the country from Sudan, apparently headed for Gaza. (AP)

Israel's navy on Wednesday escorted into port a ship its commandos seized, saying it had arms from Iran bound for militants in the Gaza Strip. (AFP)

Egypt:

Egypt's Interior Minister Mansour al-Issawi has dissolved its State Security Investigation Service, which had been blamed for decades of human rights abuses. The agency will be replaced with a new "National Security Force". (BBC)

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is touring Cairo's Tahrir Square on Wednesday during a two-day visit to Egypt. (AP)

The January 25 coalition, made up of six youth groups, said it had turned down an invitation to meet Clinton in protest at US policy toward Egypt and the US position on the anti-Mubarak revolt. The coalition said in a statement that Clinton was not welcome "because the U.S. administration long supported Mubarak's corrupt, dictatorial regime financially, politically and morally." (Reuters)

Egypt – Israel:

The supply of natural gas from Egypt to Israel has resumed after a number of delays, an Israeli partner in the East Mediterranean Gas (EMG) consortium said on Wednesday. (Reuters)

Syria:

Dozens of Syrians demonstrated in Damascus and Aleppo on Tuesday for liberty and political reforms and against corruption. The protest was quickly broken up by security forces. (AP, AFP)

Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Muallem said on Tuesday that political reforms would be implemented this year. "We will take steps towards introducing political reforms this year," Muallem said at a news conference with his Spanish counterpart. (AFP)

Lebanon:

Bishop Beshara Rai was elected as the 77th patriarch of Lebanon's influential Maronite church on Tuesday to succeed Nasrallah Sfeir. (AFP)

Jordan:

Jordan's Islamist opposition said on Tuesday it would not join a government-appointed panel to discuss political reform. The Islamic Action Front said: "We will not engage in an initiative that carries no real dialogue. We demand constitutional reforms and not just amendments to the electoral law. Only the King can manage a national dialogue." (Reuters)

Libya:

Muammar Gaddafi has denounced backers of plans for a no-fly zone over his country and urged Libyans to take up arms and prepare to confront a possible invasion by Western powers. Addressing selected supporters late on Tuesday, Gaddafi called the rebels "rats" and denounced Western nations. "They want Libyan oil," he said. "France now raises its head and says that it will strike Libya. Strike Libya?" he asked. "We'll be the one who strikes you! We struck you in Algeria, in Vietnam. You want to strike us? Come and give it a try." (Al-Jazeera)

Gaddafi's forces pushed eastwards towards the Libyan rebel stronghold of Benghazi and his government predicted victory within days while world powers debated imposing a no-fly zone to help stop him. (Reuters)

Libya's government hopes to regain control over all rebel-held territories in the country within days, deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Kaim said on Tuesday. (Reuters)

Bahrain:

Two Bahraini policemen were killed on Wednesday, in an operation to clear mainly Shi'ite Muslim protesters from a central roundabout where they had been camped out for weeks. (News Agencies)

Hundreds of Bahraini riot police firing buckshot and tear gas canisters drove pro-democracy demonstrators out of Manama's Pearl Square Wednesday, clearing the symbolic heart of the uprising. The action came a day after King Hamad, boosted by armed forces from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, declared a three-month state of emergency. (AFP)

Yemen:

An activist of the main Islamist opposition was shot dead in a gunfight with pro-regime loyalists in northern Yemen on Tuesday, a security official said. (AFP)

Hayat Abu-Saleh
Office of the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO)
Public Information and Media Unit
Tel: 972-2-5687287
Mobile: 972-54-6631114
E-mail: abusaleh@un.org
www.unsco.org