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Middle East News & Views

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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 Dayan Center.

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[Prisoner Exchange not an Alternative to Negotiations / Daoud Kuttab](#)

If Hamas succeeds in obtaining the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners, including many with long-term sentences, it will, no doubt, complicate the delicate attempts to reach a negotiated agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. Such an accomplishment will prove that those who use violence can produce better results than those who rely on non-violent negotiated means to achieve the liberation of land and prisoners.

Source: **Common Ground News Service, December 10, 2009**

[Fatah and Hamas Must Work Together / As'ad Abdul Rahman](#)

Palestinian mistakes do not justify the continued rift between the leaders in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The Goldstone Report, instead of being a good opportunity for the Palestinians to seek international pressure against Israel, became a reason for an intra-Palestinian altercation that has widened the rift. Let's agree that all have made mistakes regarding the central Palestine cause, but it becomes a crime when mistakes lead to sins.

Source: **Gulf News (Dubai), December 12, 2009**

[Sudan: The Country of a Million Crises / Tariq Alhomayed](#)



It does not matter who is trying to ignite the Sudanese robe by relighting the match; what's more important than all of this is that Sudan in its entirety today is under threat. Some might say that this threat hanging over Sudan is not new, and this is the [real] crisis, for the crises in Sudan have given rise to successive crises.

Source: **Al-Sharq Al-Awsat (London), December 9, 2009**

[Ahmadinejad and the Sins of the State / Anand Sagar](#)

It would be supreme folly for the 'supreme' clerical and political leadership in Iran to assume that the revitalized anti-government protests gathering storm on the streets of Teheran can be countered by coercion. Monday's mass mobilization of student demonstrators has clearly displayed that the "fierce government crackdown" has failed to deter dissidents who continue to openly defy the establishment.

Source: **Khaleej Times (Dubai), December 10, 2009**

[Democracy, Indeed / Ramzy Baroud](#)

In banning minarets, Switzerland has exposed how fake the rights and freedoms of the West really are for minorities. The targeting of Muslims in Western countries and the subjugation of entire Muslim nations all over the world has never ceased. Bizarrely, most of these actions have been through "democratic" channels and justified in the name of democracy, on the basis of upholding the principles of secularism and Western values.

Source: **Al-Ahram Weekly (Cairo), December 10-16, December 2009**

[Saad N. Jawad / Iraqi Kurdistan and Turkey](#)

Following the end of World War I and the division of the Ottoman Empire, the Kurdish areas were re-divided between modern Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria. Soon the Kurdish areas of the new state of Iraq, mainly the old Ottoman Wilayat of Mosul, became a bone of contention between Turkey and Iraq. Clearly, Turkey is not prepared to accept a semi-independent or fully autonomous Kurdish region or state on its southern border.

Source: **bitterlemons-international.org, December 10, 2009**

[Speak Up, 'Western Kurds' / Gürkan Zengin](#)

The "Kurdish problem" has caused bloodshed throughout Turkey's republican history. It's necessary to ask the vast majority of Kurds, the "silent Kurds," a question: What do you want, and what do you have to say about everything that's going on?. If Kurds living in the East and Southeast aren't able to speak up for fear of pressure from the PKK, then the Kurds in the West should speak up.

Source: **Today's Zaman (Istanbul), December 12, 2009**