

The week ending November 15, 2013

## IRAN

### **IAEA: No change in Iran's nuclear program under Rouhani**

The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said on Wednesday that he saw “no radical change” in Iran’s nuclear program since President Hassan Rouhani’s election last summer. According to [Reuters](#), the head of the U.N. nuclear agency is expected to release its next quarterly report on Iran by the end of the week—succeeding the previous report issued in August which showed Tehran rapidly installing nearly 2,000 more IR-1 centrifuges. Yukiya Amano, director general of the IAEA, said the Islamic Republic was pursuing its most sensitive nuclear activity, enrichment of uranium to a fissile concentration of 20 percent. Moreover, the IAEA still seeks access to Iran’s Parchin military base, where it is expected that nuclear explosive tests have been conducted. This information is an update to the information contained in this week’s [Sermon Tidbits](#). To subscribe to Sermon Tidbits, click [here](#).

### **Russia willing to help Iran build a second nuclear reactor**

The head of Iran’s atomic energy organization announced a deal with Russia on Wednesday to build a second nuclear power plant. “We hope to see the construction of the country’s second nuclear power station,” said Ali Akbar Salehi, which would be led by the Russians and be completed by March 2014. [The Washington Free Beacon](#) reported, Russia will head construction on the nuclear plant, which is one of just 34 potential new nuclear sites identified by Iran. Iran has continued enriching uranium and developing its Arak heavy water reactor amid negotiations with Western powers over their disputed nuclear program. This deal comes as the White House continues to pressure lawmakers to hold off on passing a new round of sanctions. This information is an update to the information contained in this week’s [Sermon Tidbits](#). To subscribe to Sermon Tidbits, click [here](#).

## ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

### **Palestinian delegation resigns from negotiating post**

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas said Wednesday that his team of peace negotiators has [resigned](#) from its role in engaging with Israelis in the peace process. Abbas said he would need about a week to resume the talks, and was uncertain whether or not he would appoint a new delegation. The U.S. has set a nine-month time table for peace negotiations between Israelis and the Palestinians. This information is an update to the information contained in this week’s [Sermon Tidbits](#). To subscribe to Sermon Tidbits, click [here](#).

## **Palestinian youth stabs sleeping Israeli soldier to death**

An Israeli soldier, [18-year-old Eden Atias of Nazareth Illit](#), died after he was stabbed multiple times in the neck by a Palestinian youth on a bus at the central bus station in Afula. Eyewitnesses said Atias was sleeping in his seat on the bus when he was attacked. “The bus stopped and people had stepped out,” an eyewitness said. “A female soldier was left on the bus, along with the soldier [who was stabbed] and the terrorist. Suddenly the female soldier started screaming for help, she ran outside, she was shaking. The terrorist had stabbed the soldier, he was covered in blood.” Atias enlisted only two weeks ago and was still in basic training. He was traveling to his base after a sick leave. The suspect is a 16-year-old Palestinian resident of Jenin who did not have a permit to work or reside in Israel, according to police.

## **THE GREATER MIDDLE EAST**

### **Main Syria opposition group in exile chooses government**

[The Wall Street Journal](#) reported that the main Syrian opposition group in exile has elected an interim government to administer rebel-held areas in the country’s north in a new effort to unify the fractured movement fighting to topple the regime. The Western-backed Syrian Opposition Coalition, which is based in Istanbul, said the government was formed in coordination with rebels fighting inside Syria. Meanwhile, Hassan Nasrallah, the chief of the Lebanese terror network Hezbollah, declared on Thursday that he will keep his forces in Syria fighting alongside President Bashar Assad’s regime. Nasrallah addressed a crowd of thousands in Beirut at a gathering to commemorate Ashura, an annual Muslim mourning festival. Hezbollah has maintained a significant presence among Assad’s fighting forces throughout Syria’s civil war, which has claimed over 120,000 lives since March 2011.

## **ISRAEL IN THE NEWS**

### **IDF aid mission leaves for Philippines**

An IDF delegation departed on a humanitarian mission to the Philippines Wednesday morning to provide aid to the storm-ravaged city of Tacloban, the army said. According to [The Times of Israel](#), the 148-member group, comprising national search-and-rescue unit officials and senior doctors in the IDF medical corps, will be tasked with rapidly setting up a “multi-department medical facility” to provide medical care for casualties of the disaster in Tacloban. The facility will have children’s, women’s and ambulatory care departments, as well as a general admission department, and will be “equipped with approximately 100 tons of humanitarian and medical supplies from Israel.” An IDF assessment team of six medical and logistics experts landed in the Philippines Tuesday to find an optimal location for the field hospital. The death toll in the typhoon, which made landfall in the central Philippines on Friday, could be at least 10,000, according to reports, though the official death toll currently stands at more than 1,700. At least half a million people also have been left homeless by the devastating typhoon. An emergency response team sent to the Philippines by the Israeli disaster relief organization IsraAid to the areas hardest hit by Typhoon Haiyan arrived Monday to work primarily in Tacloban City in Leyte, one of the areas hardest-hit by the typhoon.