



Weekly Update
From 26 May to 1 June 2014

1) Morocco

*** 30.05.2014 : Démantèlement d'un réseau de recrutement de jihadistes pour le Sahel**

La police espagnole a interpellé un réseau de six personnes à la ville de Melilla. Ce réseau a envoyé 24 marocains et espagnols au Sahel pour les groupes jihadistes d'AQMI.

<http://www.yabiladi.com/articles/details/26363/melilla-reseau-jihadistes-demantele-avait.html>

*** 25.05.2014 : Des jihadistes marocains en Syrie négocient leur retour**

Plusieurs dizaines de djihadistes marocains qui combattaient en Syrie attendent désormais à la frontière syro-turque le feu vert des autorités marocaines pour rentrer dans leur pays.

Certains djihadistes marocains ont annoncé qu'ils n'ont aucunement l'intention de porter atteinte à la sécurité de leur pays, invitant Rabat à étudier leurs cas d'un point de vue non sécuritaire, mais humanitaires.

<http://www.bladi.net/djihadistes-marocains-syrie-retour.html>

2) Libya

***28.5-2.06.2014: Military Stalemate in Benghazi and Political Deadlock in Tripoli**

Threats made by Ansar Al-Sharia in a televised statement, last Wednesday, offered retired General Khalifa Haftar support in his claims to be fighting terrorism. The threats won his "Dignity Operation" additional support in Libya and tacit support in the West. General Haftar's inability, however, to translate that support into significant military results on the ground have started to sow doubts in the minds of those who joined him. His latest calls on Egypt to intervene, as well as his statements that the operation might take three to one year, have not helped his case. In Tripoli, his political supporters' tactic of prolonging the political deadlock seems to be faltering. The political impasse has continued for over a week now, with the president of the National General Assembly (Bousahmin) supporting the new Ahmed Maetiq government, while his first deputy (Al Awamy) blocked the transfer of power through a Supreme Court motion in favour of the current caretaker government led by Abdullah Al-Thinni. On Monday June 2, however, the Middle Brigade (Misrata) intervened and imposed a transfer of power to Maetiq. With parliamentary elections due in less than a month, time works in favour of the pro-General National Congress and their 17 February Revolutionaries unless General Haftar chooses to wage an all-out airstrike offensive on Benghazi, which would risk plunging Libya into all-out civil war.

3) Tunisia

***31.05.2014: Western Sahara Spoils Mohamed VI's Visit to Tunis**

Despite official statements from Tunis and Rabat, the Western Sahara issue managed to spoil the king's first visit to Tunis since Ben Ali was toppled in 2011. It is understood that President Moncef Merzouki's question why the Maghreb Union project continues to stumble was decoded by Mohamed VI as an implicit criticism of Morocco's share of responsibility in the issue. The king reportedly considered shortening his official visit before protocols on both sides managed to mend fences. Nevertheless, the absence of President Merzouki at the King's speech before the Constituent Assembly was hard to mask. The signing of 23 cooperation agreements saved the visit. Tunisian press close to the Begi Caid Sebsi camp chose, however, to ignore this matter and explained that the king's visit was an effort to enlist Merzouki's help in clamping down on Ennahda, in return for direct investment from the Gulf. This comes at a time when different political parties and ambitious politicians such as Nejjib Echebi (Republican Party) are courting Ennahda for its support in the upcoming presidential election.

<http://www.kapitalis.com/politique/22613-politique-mohammed-vi-en-tunisie-pour-contrer-ennahdha.html>

http://elwatan.com/une/les-verites-de-marzouki-irritent-mohammed-vi-02-06-2014-259562_108.php

4) Egypt

*** 29.05.2014 : Results of the 2014 presidential elections**

According to exit polls by the Egyptian Center for Public Opinion Research, "Baseera", Abdel Fattah El-Sisi won the presidential race with 94.1 percent of the vote, in the 2014 presidential elections that took place from 26 May to 28 May 2014, while the other presidential candidate Hamdeen Sabbahi had received a meagre 4.6 percent of the vote.

http://baseera.com.eg/baseera/home_en.aspx

Polling stations remained open for an extra day to allow voters working away from home to return to their governorates and cast their ballots, and thus improve the low voter turnout of the first day (a fact noted by European Union observers.)

<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/News/6379/17/Al-Sisi-sweeps-Egypt%E2%80%99s-presidential-poll-by-historic-margin.aspx>

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/29/us-egypt-election-idUSKBN0E70D720140529>

The European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) to the Arab Republic of Egypt said in a press release on 29 May that "the Presidential Election was administered in line with the law, in an environment falling short of constitutional principles." The Chief Observer noted: "Although the new Constitution sets out a wide-ranging catalogue of fundamental rights, the respect for these rights falls short of these constitutional principles. Freedoms of association, assembly and expression are areas of concern."

http://www.eueom.eu/files/pressreleases/english/290514-pressrelease-ps_en.pdf

*** 1.06.2014: UAE and Saudi Arabia to provide Egypt with extra \$20bn**

The United Arab Emirates and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will provide Egypt with up to \$20 billion in a new aid package to be negotiated following the inauguration of the new president.

<http://m.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/456611>

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/africa/11800-following-presidential-elections-uae-and-saudi-arabia-to-provide-egypt-with-extra-20bn>

*** 2.06.2014: Controversial ruling against Islamists, clashes in Al-Azhar University and sectarian tension in southern Egypt**

Early Monday saw a mob of angry Islamists burning shops owned by Coptic Christians near the ancient city of Luxor hours before the trial of a Coptic Christian accused of blasphemy.

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/huff-wires/20140602/ml-egypt-christians/>

On Monday, the Egyptian court of Al-Menia issued a controversial ruling, sentenced 37 Islamists to death and 492 others to life in prison, describing those convicted as "demons (...) dressed in the cloak of Islam".

<http://www.swissinfo.ch/ara/detail/content.html?cid=38704380>

Fierce clashes erupted between police and students affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood around Al-Azhar University, in Nasr City.

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/police-brotherhood-students-clash-azhar-university>

5) Yemen

*** 03.06.2014: Cease-fire agreement between the Houthis and government forces in Northern Yemen**

The cease fire was agreed after at least 120 people (100 Houthi rebels and 20 government soldiers) were killed in northern Yemen on Monday June 2 as a result of fighting. Mediation efforts were led by the interior minister.

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Jun-03/258662-at-least-120-killed-in-yemen-fighting.ashx#ixzz33ZNXCAFh>

6) Mauritania

***01.06.2014: Brother of Salafi Prisoner Released**

It seems that the death of a Salafi prisoner in a maximum detention prison at the Salah Edine military base, in northern Mali, two weeks ago, has compelled Nouakchott to release Tidjani Ould Sidna, brother of Sidi Ould Sidna, who was sentenced for charges of involvement in the killing of a French tourist in 2007. Tidjani Ould Sidna was released on Sunday, after three years in prison on charges of belonging to Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. The move came in the context of the presidential election campaign in Mauritania, which opened over the weekend.

<http://ani.mr/?menuLink=9bf31c7ff062936a96d3c8bd1f8f2ff3&idNews=24768> (Arabic)

7) Mali

***27.05.2014: Resignation of the Minister of Defence**

As expected by Sahel observers, the heavy loss in lives of Malian soldiers (56) in the bloody confrontation with Tuareg rebel groups in Kidal in late May cost Soumeilou Boubeye Maïga, Minister of Defence, his post. Maïga, who has directed Mali's intelligence services and foreign affairs in the past twenty years, called on his party (Coalition for Solidarity) to open a parliamentary inquiry into all calls and messages exchanged between Bamako and the commanders who led the military operations in Kidal.

<http://ani.mr/?menuLink=9bf31c7ff062936a96d3c8bd1f8f2ff3&idNews=24724>

8) Chad

*** 29.05.2014 : Tchadiens assassinés au Sud Libye**

Le ministère tchadien des Affaires étrangères a annoncé que dix ressortissants tchadiens venant de la Libye ont été assassinés à Sebha alors qu'ils rentraient vers le Tchad.

<http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20140530-dix-tchadiens-assassines-le-sud-libye/>

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