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मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

## Armenia

### Minister of High-Tech Industry visits Aragats defence contractor

Armenpress, August 1, 2024

Minister of High-Tech Industry Mkhitar Hayrapetyan has visited the headquarters of defence contractor Aragats LLC. The company was founded in 1992 and specializes in the development and production of military-grade electronic devices. Aragats CEO Hovhannes Gharibyan briefed the minister on the latest reforms and industrial volumes of the company, the ministry said in a press release. The defence contractor has developed and produced the thermal imaging device for the 9K111 Fagot anti-tank missile system. The cost of the device is approximately four times lower compared to similar ones produced in other countries, while the quality is on the highest level. Gharibyan said that the entire production of Aragats is in service in the Armenian Armed Forces, and that the company's capacity has enabled them to consider starting exports.

<https://armenpress.am/en/article/1196850>

### Azerbaijan makes new provocation, accusation against Armenia

News.am, August 2, 2024

The Azerbaijani media, citing the joint statement by the General Prosecutor's Office and the State Border Service and the National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) of Azerbaijan, report about the explosion of a landmine in one of the territories recently transferred by Armenia. "On August 2, the landmines planted by the Armenian side exploded in the village

of Gizilhajili, Gazakh district," the Azerbaijani media reported. As a result of the explosion, an ANAMA employee was wounded in the legs, and two more of its employees sustained shrapnel wounds. They were hospitalized, and their injuries are not life-threatening. It is about the former part of the Armenia-Azerbaijan border where landmines were used on both sides. Now, however, Azerbaijan presents it as "landmines planted by Armenia" and uses this incident for provocations and accusations.

<https://news.am/eng/news/836813.html>

### Indian Defence Research Wing: first Indian Akash-1S SAMs to arrive in Armenia by the end of the year

News.am, August 8, 2024

The first Indian Akash-1S surface-to-air missile systems will arrive in Armenia by the end of this year, Indian Defence Research Wing reports. According to the publication, Yerevan has ordered 15 units of these air defence systems at a cost of \$720 million. Armenia will be the first foreign buyer of these Indian systems. The Akash-1S systems utilize a combination of simultaneous active target acquisition and guidance, providing a robust defense against airborne threats such as fighter jets, guided missiles and drones. "The Akash-1S was developed in 1983 and adopted into service 30 years later. It can shoot down aerial targets within a range of 4 to 25 kilometers. The acquisition of this advanced air defence system is expected to significantly increase Armenia's military potential. The successful production and imminent delivery of Akash 1S to Armenia underscores India's growing role

in defense technology and its status as a major global arms exporter.

<https://news.am/eng/news/837522.html>

## Azerbaijan

### U.A.E, Azerbaijan agree to develop economic partnership

Aletihad, August 1, 2024

The ninth session of the UAE-Azerbaijan Joint Intergovernmental Commission (JIC) for Economic, Trade and Technical Cooperation between the two countries was held in the Azerbaijani city of Shusha. The session was attended by several senior officials and government and private sector representatives from both sides. During the meeting, the UAE and Azerbaijan agreed to develop their existing economic partnership in the sectors of entrepreneurship, SMEs, new economy, tourism, aviation, industry, innovation, technology, agriculture, food security, logistics, culture, energy, renewable energy, and investment. Bin Touq stated that the UAE and Azerbaijan share strong strategic relations and economic partnerships that have evolved over more than three decades.

<https://en.aletihad.ae/news/uae/4504375/uae--azerbaijan-agree-to-develop-economic-partnership>

### Azerbaijan weighs its army's urgent actions on Armenian provocations, operational standing

Trend News Agency, August 3, 2024

Urgent measures taken by Azerbaijan Army units against the provocations committed by Armenia, armed by its protectors, on the conditional border in

order to aggravate the situation in the region and the current operational conditions were analyzed, Trend reports. The issue was discussed during the board meeting on the results of the first half of 2024 at the Azerbaijani Ministry of Defence. The tasks set by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces Ilham Aliyev to the Azerbaijan Army were delivered to the board meeting participants. Stressing the phrase voiced by the President, "No matter how much power and weapons the state has and how carefully military operations are planned, it is the soldiers and officers who achieve victory," the Defence Ministry, Colonel General Zakir Hasanov noted that the Azerbaijan Army is capable of accomplishing any tasks of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief with high professionalism.

<https://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/3930414.html>

## Iran

### Iran seeks to deepen military ties with Belarus

Iran Wire, August 2, 2023

Top defence officials from Iran and Belarus have held talks in Tehran on the establishment of a commission for military cooperation between the two countries, Iranian state media reported. The August 1 meeting between Mohammad Bagheri, the head of the General Staff of Iran's Armed Forces, and visiting Belarusian Defence Minister Viktor Khrenin took place one day after Tehran and Minsk signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in the field of defence cooperation. Speaking

at the meeting, Bagheri said that “defence and security cooperation” between the two countries “should be expanded today in response to the changes that are taking place in the global power structure.” “The world's geopolitical landscape is swiftly transitioning from a unipolar state to a multipolar world,” he added. On July 31, Khrenin and his Iranian counterpart, Defence Minister Mohammad Reza Ashtiani, oversaw the signing of the MOU to cooperate in the field of defence.

<https://iranwire.com/en/politics/119117-iran-seeks-to-deepen-military-ties-with-belarus/>

### **Iran's Army air defence force to receive new equipment: Cmdr.**

Mehr News Agency, August 6, 2024,

Deputy Commander of the Iranian Army's Air Defence Force Brigadier General Alireza Elhami says that the Islamic Republic's Army unit is set to receive new equipment. In his remarks on August 6, Brigadier General Elhami stressed that the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran is focusing on upgrading its equipment in different areas. The production of ground-based equipment and up-to-date missile systems with a longer range are on our agenda, he added. He further stressed that the Air Defence Force unit of the Iranian Army updates and prepares itself and increases its power in different fields including the field of drones, radars, and information-gathering systems. A lot of equipment is ready to join the combat section of the Air Defence Force, and there might be a joining ceremony for the joining of new equipment during Air Defence Week, according to him. "We are

100% self-sufficient and we are not dependent on foreign equipment, and the security of our air borders is not dependent on foreign countries."

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/219089/Iran-s-Army-Air-Defence-Force-to-receive-new-equipment-Cmdr>

### **IRGC Navy receives 2,640 missile systems, drones**

Mehr News Agency, August 9, 2024

In a ceremony in the presence of the commander-in-chief of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) on 9 August, 2,640 missile systems, drones and other equipment were handed over to the IRGC Naval Combat Organization. The missiles were cruise missiles with new capabilities, such as high-explosive warheads and undetectability, each of which can cause severe damage and sink enemy destroyers. There were various types of long-range, medium-range radar evading missile systems, combat drones, detection and destruction, electronic warfare systems, naval radars and other combat equipment, of which only 210 of the 2640 systems were displayed.

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/219223/2-640-missile-sys-drones-military-equipment-join-IRGC-Navy>

### **IRGC can reach US Navy at closest point in international waters**

Mehr News Agency, August 12, 2024

“After the United States imposed sanctions on the IRGC Navy, we had to show that the IRGC Navy is not just a coastal force and is capable of supplying various types of heavy vessels, enabling it to have a

presence in international waters,” Colonel Soleimani said on August 12. He added that the naval fleet, with a domestically-developed Shahid Mahdavi oceangoing warship acting as the flagship, began its mission from Farsi Island in the Persian Gulf where the US martyred an IRGC commander. “This conveyed important messages to the US,” he emphasized, according to PressTV. During its mission, the Shahid Mahdavi warship passed through important and strategic straits of the world, including the Strait of Malaga, he added. The IRGC commander said the Iranian flotilla crossed the Equator and entered the zone of the US Navy’s 7th fleet. For the first time, it approached Diego Garcia Island and one of the most important US bases in the Indian Ocean, and returned home after 39 days of successful voyage, he added. “We sent a message to Americans that we are able to reach the closest point to you,” Soleimani asserted.

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/219401/IRGC-can-reach-US-Navy-at-closest-point-in-intl-waters>

### **Iran's defence achievements 'very impressive'**

Mehr News Agency, August 14, 2024

Russian Defence Minister Andrey Belousov has termed Iran's defence achievements 'very impressive'. Andrey Belousov visited Iran's booth at the 10th International Military-Technical Forum “Army-2024” in Russia on August 13. Iranian defence industry experts briefed the Russian defence chief about Iran's achievements showcased in the exhibition.

The Army 2024 international military and technical forum is underway in Moscow from August 12, with the presence of representatives from 83 countries, including Iran, China, India, and Belarus. The Army 2024 international military and technical forum has kicked off in the Patriot Exhibition Center near Moscow. Leading companies in the Russian defense industry will present about 1,500 products. The event is being held on August 12-14.

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/219503/Russia-terms-Iran-s-defense-achievement-very-impressive>

### **Iraq**

#### **Attack on US troops in Iraq highlights escalating Middle East tensions**

Al Shafaq News, August 7, 2024

The recent attack on Ain al-Asad airbase in Iraq, which wounded at least five American servicemembers and two contractors, underscores a potential escalation in the already volatile Middle East, according to a detailed analysis by Vox. The incident occurred on August 5, amid a period of heightened violence in the region. The ongoing conflict in Gaza, coupled with the recent assassinations of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukur, attributed to Israel, has fueled expectations of Iranian retaliation. As Vox noted, "uncertainty over how Iran will respond has raised the possibility of wider conflict in the region."

<https://www.shafaq.com/en/Report/Attack-on-US-troops-in-Iraq-highlights-escalating-Middle-East-tensions>

### **Iraq seeks weaning off Iranian energy with a new link with Turkiye**

Al Shafaq News, August 8, 2024

The new Iraqi-Turkish power line is a part of Baghdad's broader strategy to diversify its energy resources and reduce its reliance on Iranian gas and electricity, a new article by the Middle East Institute suggested on August 8. On July 21, 2024, Baghdad inaugurated the new power line connecting Türkiye and Iraq to handle Turkish electricity imports. This 115-kilometer (71-mile) transmission line is expected to deliver 300 megawatts of energy to a power station west of Mosul with the aim of supplying northern Iraq, including the regions of Nineveh, Salahuddin, and Kirkuk.

<https://www.shafaq.com/en/Report/Iraq-seeks-weaning-off-Iranian-energy-with-a-new-link-with-Turkiye-report>

### **Israel**

#### **Israel moves to strengthen defence production amid boycott calls**

Tzally Greenberg

Defensenews, August 1, 2024

Israel has reached an agreement with Elbit Systems on an NIS 815 million — approximately \$215 million in U.S. currency — contract to supply the country's military with 120mm “Iron Sting” mortars, the Israeli Ministry of Defence and Elbit Systems announced on July 29. The mortar munitions are already in use by the IDF's ground forces in the ongoing “Iron Swords” war in Gaza and along its northern border against the militant groups Hamas and Hezbollah,

respectively. Israel's agreement with the Haifa-based Elbit Systems comes as part of a push to strengthen production independence, the Israeli Ministry of Defence noted. Incentivizing this effort are public calls to boycott the sale of ammunition and ammunition parts to Israel due to its war in Gaza. The new contract also follows a delay of ammunition shipments to Israel from the U.S. coinciding with Israel's entry into Rafah. The Iron Sting munition is a precision-guided 120mm mortar designed to accurately target and destroy objectives, using both immune GPS and laser guidance technology.

<https://www.defensenews.com/global/mid-east-africa/2024/08/01/israel-moves-to-strengthen-defense-production-amid-boycott-calls/>

#### **US approves \$20 billion weapons sale to Israel amid regional tensions**

Tara Copp, AP

Defensenews, August 14, 2024

The U.S. has approved \$20 billion in arms sales to Israel, including scores of fighter jets and advanced air-to-air missiles, the State Department announced on August 13. Congress was notified of the impending sale, which includes more than 50 F-15 fighter jets, Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missiles, or AMRAAMs, 120mm tank ammunition, high explosive mortars and tactical vehicles. The move comes at a time of intense concern that Israel may become involved in a wider Middle East war. However, the weapons are not expected to get to Israel anytime soon, with the contracts slated to take years to fulfill.

Much of what is being sold is to help Israel increase its military capability in the long term. The earliest systems being delivered under the contract aren't expected until the 2026 timeframe.

<https://www.defensenews.com/industry/2024/08/14/us-approves-20-billion-weapons-sale-to-israel-amid-regional-tensions/>

## Jordan

### Jordan, Malaysia discuss strengthening military cooperation

Qatar News Agency, August 5, 2024

Chairman of Jordanian Joint Chiefs of Staff, Major General Yousef Ahmed Al Hunaiti, met in Amman, on August 5, with chief of Malaysia's Defence Forces, General Mohammad Ab Rahman, and his accompanying delegation, currently visiting Amman. The two sides discussed avenues for enhancing cooperation between the two countries in a range of military fields, in addition to the latest regional and global developments of common concern.

<https://www.qna.org.qa/en/News-Area/News/2024-08/05/0048-jordan,-malaysia-discuss-strengthening-military-cooperation>

### Jordan will not be a battlefield for Iran or Israel, foreign minister warns

The Jerusalem Post, August 10, 2024

Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said on August 10, that the kingdom would not be a battlefield for Iran or Israel, as the region braces for a possible new wave of attacks by Tehran and its allies following last week's killing of senior members of militant groups Hamas and Hezbollah.

"We will not be a battlefield for Iran or Israel. We informed the Iranians and the Israelis that we will not allow anyone to violate our airspace and risk the safety of our citizens," the Jordanian foreign minister said in an interview with Saudi-owned Al Arabiya TV. "We will intercept anything that passes through our airspace or think that it constitutes a threat to us or our citizens."

<https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-814149>

### Army chief reviews final preparations for SOFEX 2024 in Aqaba

The Jordan Times, August 15, 2024

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maj. Gen. Yousef Ahmed Huneiti on August 15, inspected the final preparations for the 14th Special Operations Forces Exhibition and Conference SOFEX 2024, which will be held at the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority on September 1. During his visit, Huneiti, accompanied by senior military officers, toured various pavilions of the exhibition and assessed the readiness of the participating military units for the exercises to be held during the event, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra. The army chief praised the efforts made to ensure the exhibition is prepared on schedule and underlined the importance of SOFEX as a major platform for international engagement in the defence and security sectors. The event is an opportunity for Jordan and its allies to work together to advance defence technology and industry.

<https://jordantimes.com/news/local/army-chief-reviews-final-preparations-sofex-2024-aqaba>

## Kuwait

### **Kuwait will not become launchpad for attacks on neighbors**

Mehr News Agency, August 1, 2024

Kuwaiti authorities said on August 1, they will not allow the nation's land or airspace to be used as launchpads for military attacks on neighboring countries. Defence Ministry spokesperson Col. Hamad Al-Sager dismissed reports that suggested otherwise, reported the Kuwait News Agency on August 1, according to Arab News. There are growing fears of a wider regional conflicts following the assassination of Haniyeh, and an Israeli strike on a southern suburb of Beirut on July 30, that killed senior Hezbollah commander Fouad Shukur.

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/218836/Kuwait-will-not-become-launchpad-for-attacks-on-neighbors>

### **Kuwait Oil Price Up to USD 76.75 pb**

Qatar News Agency, August 8, 2024

The price of Kuwaiti oil went up 47 cents to USD 76.75 pb on August 7, compared to USD 76.28 pb the day before, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on August 8, according to Kuwait's news agency (KUNA). On a global scale, the price of the Brent crude futures' contracts went up USD 1.85 to settle at USD 78.33 pb, as did the West Texas Intermediate crude, up USD 2.03 to USD 75.23 pb.

<https://www.qna.org.qa/en/News-Area/News/2024-08/08/0045-kuwait-oil-price-up-to-usd-7675-pb>

## Lebanon

### **60 rockets fired from Lebanon at northern Israel after assassination of top Hezbollah commander**

Mohammad Sio

Anatolia Agency, August 2, 2024

At least 60 rockets were launched from southern Lebanon into northern Israel late August 1, in the first attack since Tel Aviv assassinated top Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukur earlier this week in Beirut. Israel's public broadcaster, KAN, reported that the rockets were launched towards the Western Galilee, with 15 of them being intercepted. An Israeli army statement said that five projectiles crossed from Lebanon into Israel, some of which were intercepted, and the rest fell in open areas. Hezbollah has not commented on the incident. The escalation comes against the backdrop of an Israeli onslaught on the Gaza Strip, which has killed nearly 39,500 people since last October following an attack by the Palestinian resistance group Hamas.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/60-rockets-fired-from-lebanon-at-northern-israel-after-assassination-of-top-hezbollah-commander/3292886>

### **Tension with Lebanon 'may escalate into war,' Israel's defence minister says**

Mohammad Sio

Anatolia Agency, August 8, 2027

Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant warned on August 7, that the escalating tension along the border with Lebanon may deteriorate into a war. "As things



stand, (Hezbollah leader Hassan) Nasrallah may drag Lebanon into paying extremely heavy prices. They can't even imagine what might happen," Gallant said as he attended a drill simulating a conflict in Lebanon. "This may also deteriorate into a war. It's not theoretical, it's real," he added in statements cited by The Times of Israel newspaper. Regional tensions have escalated following last week's assassination of Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran. While Hamas and Iran accused Israel of carrying out Haniyeh's assassination, Tel Aviv has not confirmed or denied responsibility. Hezbollah has also threatened to retaliate against Israel following the assassination of its senior commander Fouad Shukur in an airstrike in Beirut's southern suburb on July 30.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/tension-with-lebanon-may-escalate-into-war-israel-s-defense-minister-says/3297937>

### **Israel kills Hamas commander in Lebanon's Sidon; bodyguard said critically wounded**

Emanuel Fabian

Times of Israel, August 10, 2024

An Israeli airstrike on August 9, killed a Hamas commander in the southern Lebanese port city of Sidon, in a joint operation claimed by the Israel Defence Forces and Shin Bet security service. A Hamas source and two other security sources told Reuters that Samer al-Hajj's bodyguard was also critically wounded in the strike. According to a statement from the military and Shin Bet, al-Hajj was responsible for "advancing terror attacks

and projectile launches from Lebanon toward Israeli territory." Al-Hajj was the commander of Hamas's military forces in the Ein el-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp near Sidon, and responsible for "recruiting and training terrorists to attack the State of Israel," the Israeli statement added. Lebanon's official National News Agency reported that al-Hajj was traveling in a SUV when it was struck by two missiles.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-kills-hamas-commander-in-lebanons-sidon-bodyguard-said-critically-wounded/>

## **Oman**

### **Bell and Royal Air Force of Oman sign purchase agreement for new aircraft**

Zawya, August 12, 2024

Bell Textron Inc. is pleased to announce the signing of a purchase agreement with the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) for new aircraft. This acquisition is to develop and enhance RAFO's capabilities. The Royal Air Force of Oman has chosen the aircraft for its unmatched versatility and performance. They are perfectly compatible with RAFO's operational needs and community services, making them a valuable addition to the fleet. "The Royal Air Force of Oman's addition of this helicopter to the fleet serves as a testament to its search-and-rescue capabilities," said the Chief Commercial Officer of Bell Textron Inc. "The aircraft is an easily configurable platform that provides vital support to military forces."

<https://www.zawya.com/en/press-release/companies-news/bell-and-royal-air-force-of-oman-sign-purchase-agreement-for-new-aircraft-ugsj6uju>

## Palestine

### **‘Far from Victory’ – Israeli officer’s challenge claims of victory in Gaza in open letter**

Palestine Chronicle, August 11, 2024

“We, who came from the field, know very well that the situation is still far from victory,” the officers said. Dozens of Israeli reserve officers said in a letter on August 11, that the Israeli army remains “far from victory” in Gaza despite Tel Aviv’s ongoing genocidal war on the Strip, Israeli media reported. The letter, signed by over 70 officers, was addressed to Israeli Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi. It reportedly expressed surprise at recent claims by senior army officials that victory is near and that it may be time to transition to pinpoint raids. “The public sees the bombings and targeted assassinations and thinks this is how a war should be fought,” the officers said adding: “It is important to us that the public knows that this is not how wars are won, wars are won on foot. You conquer territory, cleanse it, hold it, and move on to the next target.” “We, who came from the field, know very well that the situation is still far from victory,” the officers added, pointing out that Palestinian Resistance groups continue to have cross-border capabilities, including UAVs, explosive drones, and mortars.

<https://www.palestinechronicle.com/far-from-victory-israeli-officers-challenge-claims-of-victory-in-gaza-in-open-letter/>

### **‘US funding of Israeli genocide ballooning’ – UN rapporteur, Francesca Albanese**

Palestine Chronicle, August 12, 2024

The US State Department announced a few days ago that the White House was set to provide Israel with \$3.5 billion to purchase American weapons and military equipment. The UN’s Special Rapporteur on Palestine, Francesca Albanese, has said “US funding of Israeli genocide” was “ballooning” as the Israeli army “uses ever more lethal bombs.” Her comment comes after the latest Israeli massacre of displaced families sheltering at the Tabaeen School in Gaza City on August 10, killing more than 100 and injuring several more. “The ones used yesterday in the #AlTabinSchool massacre sliced bodies to the point of making them unrecognizable,” Albanese said on X on August 11. “They are now identified by weight: 70kg bag = 1 adult. Revolting,” she added.

<https://www.palestinechronicle.com/us-funding-of-israeli-genocide-ballooning-un-rapporteur-francesca-albanese/>

## Qatar

### **Chief of staff meets with Norway Chief of Defence**

Qatar News Agency, August 7, 2024

HE Chief of Staff of Qatar Armed Forces, Staff Lieutenant-General (Pilot) Salem bin Hamad bin Aqeel Al Nabit, met with the Norway Chief of Defence General Eirik Kristoffersen. The meeting discussed topics of shared interest, in addition to

military cooperation ties between the two sides and ways to strengthen them. HE Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the State of Qatar (non-resident) to Kingdom of Norway, Nadia bint Ahmad Al Sheebi, and several of senior officers of the Qatar Armed forces attended the meeting.

<https://www.qna.org.qa/en/News-Area/News/2024-08/07/0065-chief%C2%A0of%C2%A0staff-meets-with%C2%A0norway-chief-of-defense>

### **UK Chief of Defence staff meets Turkish Counterpart**

Qatar News Agency, August 9, 2024

UK Chief of the Defence Staff Admiral Tony Radakin met on August 9, with his Turkish counterpart Metin Gurak and his accompanying delegation, who is currently visiting the UK. During the meeting, they discussed cooperation and exchanged views on a number of military issues of joint interest.

<https://www.qna.org.qa/en/News-Area/News/2024-08/09/0021-uk-chief-of-defense-staff-meets-turkish-counterpart>

### **Saudi Arabia**

#### **Riyadh hosts fourth industrial revolution hackathon to foster innovation in key sectors**

Saudi Gazette, August 9, 2024

The Saudi capital on August 8, witnessed the launch of the Fourth Industrial Revolution Applications Hackathon, organized by the Ministry of Communications and Information

Technology in partnership with the National Industry Development and Logistics Program. The event, which runs until August 10, has attracted more than 400 participants, including innovators and creators from various sectors, all focused on developing innovative technical solutions aimed at enhancing the adoption of the Fourth Industrial Revolution applications across four different tracks: industry, energy, mining, and logistics services. Driven by the Ministry's commitment to raising awareness of the Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies and their direct impact on achieving the goals of the National Industry Development and Logistics Program, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology has emphasized the importance of digital transformation and the adoption of these technologies in the four sectors. This initiative also seeks to boost research and innovation, contributing to an increase in the percentage of entrepreneurs in technical fields, thereby ensuring the achievement of economic, environmental, and social sustainability.

<https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/644740/SAUDI-ARABIA/Riyadh-hosts-fourth-industrial-revolution-hackathon-to-foster-innovation-in-key-sectors>

#### **Saudi Arabia to host space tourism balloon test flight**

Jennifer Bell,

Alarabiya, August 9, 2024

A prototype space balloon designed for tourist flights to the stratosphere is set to

undergo testing in Saudi Arabia this September, marking a significant step toward commercial space tourism. Halo Space, a Spanish startup, has developed the balloon with the goal of offering zero-emission trips to altitudes of up to 35 kilometers, it announced in a statement. The company plans to begin commercial operations in 2026, with each ticket expected to cost around 150,000 euros (\$163,791). Before launching commercial flights, Halo Space must demonstrate the balloon's safety. The upcoming test in Saudi Arabia, supported by the country's Communications, Space and Technology Commission (CST), aims to validate critical systems. "This mission is designed to meticulously validate all our critical systems we've been developing for the past three years," Alberto Castrillo, Halo Space's Chief Technology Officer, said in a statement. The test flight will see the prototype capsule, named Aurora, ascend to 30 kilometers above Earth's surface. Throughout the flight, the company will assess the technology's performance.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/saudi-arabia/2024/08/09/saudi-arabia-to-host-space-tourism-balloon-test-flight>

### **Saudi Arabia and Egypt to intensify defence cooperation**

Saudi Gazette, August 14, 2024

The Saudi-Egyptian Military Committee, which held its tenth meeting in Cairo on August 14, reviewed the strategic relations between the two countries. The committee discussed ways to further enhance bilateral cooperation in the defense and military

fields. It also reviewed a number of topics of common interest. The committee meeting was chaired by the Saudi Chief of the General Staff Gen. Fayyad Al-Ruwaili and the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of Egypt Lt. Gen. Ahmed Khalifa. A number of senior officers of the Saudi and Egyptian armed forces were also present in the meeting.

<https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/644834/SAUDI-ARABIA/Saudi-Arabia-and-Egypt-to-intensify-defense-cooperation>

### **Saudi Arabia joins hands with global community in establishing peace in Sudan**

Saudi Gazette, August 15, 2024

Saudi Arabia joined hands with the United Nations, African Union and a number of friendly countries in their joint efforts to end the war and establish peace in Sudan. "We are working hard in Switzerland on the first day of intensive diplomatic efforts for Sudan to support humanitarian access, cessation of hostilities, and compliance in accordance with previous Jeddah outcomes, other efforts, and international humanitarian law," they said in a joint press statement. The statement was issued by Saudi Arabia along with the United States, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, the African Union, and the United Nations.

<https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/644854/SAUDI-ARABIA/Saudi-Arabia-joins-hands-with-global-community-in-establishing-peace-in-Sudan>

## Syria

### **Syria participates in Ad Hoc Committee on the elaboration of International convention on combating the use of IT for criminal purposes**

Syrian Arab News Agency, August 1, 2024

Syria participates in 8th session of Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal purposes. During the session that began in New York on July 29th and continue till August 9th, an international convention, to prevent and combat crimes related to misuse of information and communications technology and bolster international cooperation and provide technical assistance to prevent these crimes, will be signed. In his speech, head of Syrian delegation, Brigadier General Dr. Yasser Kalzi, stressed the importance of the agreement in creating a particular mechanism for international cooperation and respect sovereignty of countries. Kalzi stressed that Syria supports reaching a consensus formula for a comprehensive, balanced and integrated international agreement draft that meets concerns of all countries.

<https://sana.sy/en/?p=335625>

### **Berlin Group 21: OPCW hid evidence and facts about alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria**

Syrian Arab News Agency, August 3, 2024

Berlin 21 Group said that the investigations by the Organization for the Prohibition of

Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on the alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria, specifically in Douma in April 2018, concealed a lot of evidence and facts. In a letter addressed to the Syrian Permanent Mission and representatives of international missions to OPCW, the group said that “the Director-General of the organization has ‘taken note’ of the Berlin Group’s review, but has so far failed to provide any substantive response to the substantive issues raised by that review. The letter noted that since then, a report on the controversy over the OPCW and the 2018 Douma incident has come to light, focusing on irregularities committed by the organization in its investigations in Syria. The report suggested restoring the OPCW’s credibility by ensuring its full compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention, and called on senior management to address concerns raised by former OPCW experts Brendan Whelan and Ian Henderson.

<https://sana.sy/en/?p=335740>

### **Syria condemns Ukrainian attack on Russia’s Kursk region and expresses its support for the Russian Federation in confronting this aggression**

Syrian Arab News Agency, August 10, 2024

Syria condemned the terrorist attack launched by Ukrainian forces on Russia’s Kursk region asserting that this aggression would not have taken place without the collective support of the West, expressing its support for the Russian Federation’s leadership, army and people in its battle to confront this aggression, that threatens regional peace and security. “Syrian Arab

Republic follows with great concern the news of the terrorist attack launched by Ukrainian forces on the Russian Kursk region, targeting civilian facilities, which led to the death of innocent civilians, including two ambulance crews, and the injury of dozens, including children” Foreign and Expatriates Ministry said in a statement on Saturday. Syria emphasizes that this aggression would not have taken place without the unlimited support that the West used to provide to the Zelensky regime, especially in terms of providing its mercenaries with the latest American and European quality weapons with a view to adding further provocation and escalation against the Russian Federation.

<https://sana.sy/en/?p=336095>

## Turkiye

### Turkish defence giants shake up rankings among world's top 100

Daily Sabah, August 7, 2024

Five Turkish defence companies found their place among the top 100 firms on the list published by world-renowned Defence News on August 6. The list published annually saw the addition of the arms maker Mechanical and Chemistry Industry Corp. (MKE) among leading defense firms. Last year four Turkish companies made it to the top 100. Prominent defence and electronics manufacturer Aselsan emerged as the highest-ranking Turkish firm, elevating its standing to 42nd position this year from 47th a year ago, the list showed. At the same time, the firm, alongside the Turkish Aerospace Industry (TAI), was one of the top performers considering companies that increased their defense industry revenues the fastest compared to last year. Türkiye-based

aviation firm, TAI, the developer of the country's ambitious fifth-generation fighter jet Kaan, soared from 58th rank to be placed as 50th on the list this year.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkish-defense-giants-shake-up-rankings-among-worlds-top-100>

### Turkey plans to build its own anti-missile defence system

Alarabiya News, August 7, 2024

Turkey plans to build its own anti-missile system, which it has dubbed “Steel Dome”, the president of the country’s defence industry agency said on August 7. “Our national ‘Steel Dome’ project will allow us to integrate our air defence systems, our sensors and our weapons in a single network,” Haluk Gorgun, president of the SSB agency, said in a video. The project will be led by state-owned defence companies such as Aselsan, Roketsan and MKE, as well as by public research group Tubitak Sage. According to Turkish public television TRT Haber, Steel Dome is intended to be an umbrella covering Turkish airspace and responding to threats “from the lowest to the highest altitudes” as well as from short to long range.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2024/08/07/turkey-plans-to-build-its-own-anti-missile-defense-system>

### Turkiye produces almost everything it needs in defence industry: Defence chief

Alper Şaşmaz

Anadolu Agency, August 15, 2024

Turkish Defence Minister Yasar Guler said August 14, that Türkiye can produce almost everything it needs at its defense industry facilities. "This is a great advantage for our

country and the Turkish Armed Forces," Guler told the Haberturk news channel. On Türkiye's counter-terrorism operations conducted against terrorist organizations such as the PKK, he said: "Various resources in the world are fed by countries. And these activities are still ongoing. But we believe that no matter who stands behind them, we will bury them in the pages of history together as soon as possible." "We have turned the terrorist organization into completely helpless situation" "Our units have been continuing their heroic fights in the base areas for about eight years. We have turned the terrorist organization into a completely helpless situation. A very effective fight continues with the successful activities of our security forces," Guler said. "We continue to pursue it (the terror group) wherever it goes."

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkiye/turkiye-produces-almost-everything-it-needs-in-defense-industry-defense-chief/3304124>

## United Arab Emirates

### Sharjah Finance Department inaugurates 'Cyber Defence Centre'

Emirates News Agency, August 13, 2024

The Sharjah Finance Department (SFD) inaugurated the Cyber Defence Centre on Monday to enhance its integrated information security system and protect its digital infrastructure and vital assets. Sheikh Rashid bin Saqr Al Qasimi, Director of the Sharjah Finance Department, witnessed the inauguration ceremony, which was attended by Saqr Al Ali, Director of the Information Security Office at the SFD, several directors, and employees. In his speech, Al Qasimi stated

that the Cyber Defence Centre, which started its experimental operations in 2023, officially launched its promising goals to support the departments and offices affiliated, confront the increasing cyber threats, achieve the highest levels of digital security in the SFD, and build a cyber system characterised by strength, robustness, and effectiveness.

<https://www.wam.ae/en/article/142crqa-sharjah-finance-department-inaugurates-cyber>

## Yemen

### UK maritime agency reports incident southwest of Yemen's Hodeidah

Alarabiya News, August 13, 2024

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) agency said on August 13, that it received a report of an incident 63 nautical miles southwest of Yemen's Hodeidah, adding that authorities were investigating. UKMTO said the ship captain reported explosion a distance from the vessel, but added that the vessel and crew were safe before the vessel continued to its next destination. Iran-aligned Houthi militants have launched attacks on international shipping near Yemen since last November in solidarity with Palestinians in the war between Israel and Hamas. The attacks have drawn US and British retaliatory strikes and disrupted global trade as ship owners reroute vessels away from the Red Sea and Suez Canal to sail the longer route around the southern tip of Africa.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2024/08/13/uk-maritime-agency-reports-incident-southwest-of-yemen-s-hodeidah>

# NUCLEAR AND ARMS CONTROL CENTRE

*Sylloge on West Asia is compiled by Ms. Bhawna*

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