



01-03-2019

Weekly coverage round-up (Feb 25 - Mar 1)

Weekly coverage round-up (Feb 25 - Mar 1)

Al-Jumhuriya Collective



A quick English summary of our Arabic news coverage this week.

~~“Trump changes his mind again”~~ (25 February, 2019). The White House declared 200 US soldiers would remain in Syria, despite President Trump’s announcement in December of a total troop withdrawal from the country. An unnamed Pentagon official later told Fox News the number of remaining troops would in fact be 400, distributed across Syria’s northeast as well as in the southeastern al-Tanf base, near the Jordanian and Iraqi borders. The about-turn may set the stage for a buffer zone along the Syrian-Turkish border, protected implicitly or explicitly by US and Turkish forces. For more, including our analysis of the reasons for this change of course and its potential ramifications, read the [full article](#) (Arabic).

~~“Heating in Idlib: Danger of death”~~ (26 February, 2019). Six people have been killed—five of them children—and dozens wounded this month in Idlib Province as a result of explosions caused by low-quality heating fuel. The rudimentary fuel, used especially in the camps for internally-displaced persons, emits fumes that are not only highly explosive but also poisonous, causing respiratory illnesses, pneumonia, and pharyngitis, inter alia. This in a province containing just one hospital specializing in burns, in the border town of Atmeh. For more, see our [full report](#) (Arabic).

~~“Netanyahu faces three generals”~~ (27 February, 2019). The Israeli Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper reports a recent opinion poll put the center-left Blue and White party, led by former Israeli army chief of staff Benny Gantz and former journalist Yair Lapid, ahead of Prime Minister Netanyahu’s Likud, predicting 35 seats for the former as against 29 for the latter in the upcoming parliamentary elections scheduled for 9 April. The Gantz-Lapid alliance enjoys the declared

support of two other former chiefs of staff, Moshe Yaalon and Gabi Ashkenazi, which is likely to weaken the scandal-plagued Netanyahu's familiar electoral pitch that his opponents are soft on "terror" and security. For more, see our [full report](#) (Arabic).

~~"Logging and fires: How Green Syria is being wiped out"~~ (28 February, 2019). Reports indicate that up to half of Syria's green spaces or more may have been lost in recent years due to a combination of rampant logging—with trees being cut down en masse for sale and use as firewood—and forest fires; some accidental, others caused by the Assad regime's heavy bombardment of the countryside, including with incendiary munitions. For further information on the specific regions worst affected, and the environmental ramifications, read our [full report](#) (Arabic).