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Weekly coverage round-up (Sep 9 - 13)

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Al-Jumhuriya Collective



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

“Why does the Syrian pound keep depreciating?” (9 September, 2019). Monday saw the black market exchange rate of the Syrian pound fall to a record low of 680 and 685 against the US dollar for purchase and sale, respectively, marking the most serious blow yet to the Syrian currency’s purchasing power, already greatly diminished. For an analysis of the factors driving this unprecedented depreciation, see our [full article](#) (Arabic).

“The elusive safe zone” (9 September, 2019). In principle, Washington and Ankara have agreed on the creation of a ‘safe zone’ in northern Syria, along the Turkish border strip. In practice, this zone has yet to materialize, and is unlikely to do so in the near future, for it appears to mean different things to the two sides—as it was perhaps designed to. For more, read our [full article](#) (Arabic).

“The ‘Turkification’ of Aleppo’s schools” (10 September, 2019). A new academic year began Sunday in schools across northern Aleppo Province, where approximately 150,000 students attend some 200 schools in areas ruled by Turkish-backed opposition forces. Some locals complained to Al-Jumhuriya of a “Turkification policy” pursued at these schools this year, with Turkish language instruction, Turkish flags draped on the walls, and even portraits of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan hung up in classrooms. For more details, see our [full report](#) (Arabic).

“Rescuers grapple with death in Idlib” (11 September, 2019). The systematic targeting of Syrian humanitarian aid workers—principally by the Assad regime and its allies, but also by various jihadist groups—that has taken over 1,000 lives since 2011 continued during the recent months of fighting in Idlib and Hama Provinces. An ambulance was bombed in Ma’arrat al-Nu’mān, for example, as was a civil defense center in Khan Shaykhun. Beyond the immediate risk of bombardment, moreover, aid workers also face the risk of detention by regime, or by jihadist groups, or gangs of kidnapers seeking to extort ransom payments. For more, see our [full report](#) (Arabic).

“Will Trump meet with Rouhani?” (12 September, 2019). Having failed in his diplomatic outreach first to North Korea, then most recently the Taliban, US President Donald Trump appears now to be setting his sights on Iran, a state against which Washington had hitherto pursued what it called a “maximum pressure” policy. With the abrupt departure of hawkish National Security Advisor John Bolton, and rumors of sanctions easing, Trump looks to be seeking a deal of some yet-uncertain form to tout as an achievement before next year’s elections. For an analysis of the potential scenarios over the coming weeks, see our [full article](#) (Arabic).