



## **West seeks to pressure Iran at U.N. nuclear meet**

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/03/02/us-nuclear-iran-iaea-idUSTRE82110X20120302>

Western powers hope to win Russian and Chinese backing for rebuking Iran at the UN nuclear agency next week over Tehran's weapons capability. Seeking to ward off any such diplomatic action, Iran has warned its opponents and others against making "provocative statements" at the March 5-9 meeting of the 35-nation governing board of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

Western envoys seek broad support from nations, especially Russia and China that have backed four rounds of UN sanctions since 2006, for a new IAEA resolution.

An IAEA resolution, while containing no concrete measures, would be aimed at sending a united message to Iran that they must stop stonewalling the

UN agency's investigation into possible military dimensions to its nuclear program. Iran's lack of cooperation with a senior IAEA team, during two rounds of meetings in Tehran in January and February, represented a "gigantic slap in the face" for IAEA.

A report by IAEA said Iran was significantly stepping up uranium enrichment. Iran denied westerns accusation that they seek weapons of mass destruction, saying uranium enrichment is needed for the Tehran Research reactor making isotopes for cancer care.

The tensions between Tehran and the West could, at any time, escalate into military conflict.

(Theodore Manggala Amarendra)

## **EU summit: All but two leaders sign fiscal treaty**

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17230760>

UK and Czech refuses in signing a new treaty to enforce budget discipline within the European bloc, despite the treaty having signed by the remaining 25 EU states. The new fiscal treaty aims to prevent 17 EU states running up huge debts like those that sparked the Greek, Irish and Portuguese bailouts.

UK Prime Minister David Cameron complains that his ideas for cutting red tape and boosting growth were being ignored, but later approves that the summit have taken into serious concerns about this issue. The newly reappointed President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, affirms that the British proposals were being taken seriously and he had sought to redraft the summit's conclusion accordingly.

Critics argue that the fiscal treaty is mainly a political gesture aimed to reassure taxpayers in Germany, EU's dominant economy, where there is reluctance to pay for further Eurozone bailouts. German Chancellor Angela Merkel described this treaty as a "great leap," a first step towards stability and political union.

The idea of creating this treaty emerged at the EU summit in December, where Cameroon vetoed plans to change the EU treaties so that greater budget surveillance would be enforced.

The fiscal treaty, taking into effect after being ratified by at least 12 EU states, will later go before national parliaments and, in the case of the Irish Republic, a referendum.

**(Theodore Manggala Amarendra)**

## **ICC issues arrest warrant for Sudanese minister for alleged Darfur crimes**

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41429&Cr=darfur&Cr1=>

The International Criminal Court (ICC) had issued an arrest warrant against Sudanese Defense Minister Abdelrahim Mohamed Hussein for his alleged conduct of international crimes committed in Darfur.

Out of the 41 counts of international crime, Hussein is charged to be criminally responsible for 20 counts of crimes against humanity (persecution, murder, forcible transfer, rape, inhumane acts, imprisonment or severe deprivation of liberty and torture), and 21 counts of war crimes (murder, attacks against civilian population, destruction of property, rape, pillaging and outrage upon personal dignity).

The alleged crimes are believed to be perpetrated by Hussein during attacks on the towns and villages of Kodoom, Bindisi,

Mukjar and Arawala in the Wadi Salih and Mukjar localities of West Darfur state from August 2003 to March 2004.

From evidences gathered, the ICC Prosecutor strongly believes that Hussein is one of those who bear the greatest criminal responsibility for the same crimes and incidents presented in previous warrants of arrest for government minister Ahmed Harun and Janjaweed leader Ali Kushayb, both of whom have been indicted by the Court.

This is the ICC's fourth case in Darfur, which the Security Council referred to it in 2005 after a UN inquiry found serious violations of international human rights law.

(Theodore Manggala Amarendra)

## **International Criminal Court to deliver its first verdict next month**

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41413&Cr=international+criminal+court&Cr1=>

The International Criminal Court (ICC) announced its plan to deliver its first ever verdict on 14 March 2012, issuing a judgment in the war crimes trial of Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, a Congolese man accused of participating in the recruitment of child soldiers. The trial itself started in January 2009. Closing statements were presented by the parties and participants in August 2011.

Mr. Lubanga Dyilo is accused of having committed, with others, the war crimes of enlisting and conscripting children under the age of 15 into the rebel group known as Forces patriotiques pour la libération du Congo (Patriotic Forces for the Liberation of the Congo), and using them to participate actively in hostilities

in Ituri district in north-eastern the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) between September 2002 and August 2003.

In accordance with Article 66(3) of the 2002 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, to convict an accused person, the trial chamber must be convinced of his or her guilt beyond reasonable doubt.

In the event of a conviction, the trial chamber will consider an appropriate sentence. Irrespective of whether the accused is acquitted or convicted, the court is required to establish the principles to be applied in relation to reparations, and it may make orders regarding awards of reparations to victims.

*(Theodore Manggala Amarendra)*

## **Security Council extends UN presence in Timor-Leste until end of 2012**

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41341&Cr=timor&Cr1=>

The Security Council had extended the mandate of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Timor-Leste until the end of 2012. UN is hoped to continue promoting peace, stability and development in Timor-Leste along this year; an expected to be eventful year for the country.

Until its expected departure on 31 December, the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) will assist with key tasks such as institutional development and capacity-building of the national police, known as the PNTL, as well as provide electoral assistance.

This year Timor-Leste will celebrate the 10th anniversary of its independence and hold presidential elections on 17 March, followed by a legislative poll at the end of June.

By its resolution 1969 published in 2011, the Council endorsed the plan of UNMIT's phased drawdown, "in accordance with the wishes of the Government of Timor-Leste, conditions on the ground and following the successful completion of the 2012

electoral process."

It also urged all parties in the country, particularly political leaders, to continue to work together and engage in political dialogue and to consolidate peace, democracy, rule of law, and sustainable social and economic development; promote human rights; and advance national reconciliation.

Ameerah Haq, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of UNMIT, told the Council yesterday that Timor-Leste has made significant progress in strengthening national peace and stability and that preparation for the upcoming elections are going smoothly.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will, after consulting with the Government formed after the elections, submit a report to the Council on his suggestions on UNMIT's anticipated withdrawal and the scope of the UN's future presence in Timor-Leste.

(Theodore Manggala Amarendra)

## **China, Philippines Argue Over Planned Oil Search**

<http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/asia/china-philippines-argue-over-planned-oil-search/501437>

Lately in February, the Philippines have claimed that they have the right to invite foreign companies to explore the oil and gases located between its western coast and the South China Sea, dismissing China's claim of sovereignty and jurisdiction over the South China Sea.

The verbal tussle erupted after Philippines' Energy Secretary, Jose Almendras told reports in Manila that the Philippine government has invited major foreign oil companies to invest in fuel exploration in two offshore areas northwest of Palawan province, a region falling within the State's 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, Hong Lei, replied that the offshore areas are China's, and it would be illegal for any country, government, or company, to develop oil and natural gas under Chinese Jurisdiction, without the Chinese government's permission.

Rejecting China's position, Philippine Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario said in a brief

statement that the offshore areas being opened to foreign investors are well within the Philippine's sovereignty based on the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea.

Last year, Philippines officials separately accuses China for repeatedly intruding into its maritime territories, and at least once trying to disrupt a Philippine oil exploration in another offshore area called the Reed Bank, also off Palawan.

Palawan province, about 820 kilometers southwest of Manila, faces the South China Sea, The sea, which surrounds potentially oil – and gas-rich islands and reefs, is claimed entirely by China, but the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam have made competing claims.

The Philippines has invited companies to explore for oil and gas in 15 areas nationwide, including the offshore areas lying 79 kilometers and 123 kilometers from Palawan.

Almendras said that the Philippine government would start

awarding exploration contracts to investors next month. He did not say whether the first batch of

permits will cover the two areas also being claimed by China.

(Theodore Manggala Amarendra)

## **EU leaders set to endorse Serbian candidacy**

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/03/01/eu-leaders-set-endorse-serbian-candidacy.html>

European Union leaders are expected to formally grant Serbia the status of a candidate for membership in the bloc during their summit on 1 March 2012 in recognition of its government's efforts to round up war crimes suspects and normalize relations with its former province of Kosovo.

The move would represent a remarkable turnaround for Serbia, which spent much of the 1990s ostracized and isolated from the EU after its then-strongman Slobodan Milosevic instigated the wars in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo. When Milosevic agreed to a U.S.-brokered agreement to end the war in Bosnia in 1995, about 60,000 NATO troops — including about 30,000 Americans — were deployed to that nation to enforce the accord.

And in 1999, NATO bombed

Serbia to prevent a crackdown on ethnic Albanians — in the first military campaign in the alliance's history.

Serbia had been widely expected to get candidacy in December after it captured two top war crimes suspects, but was disappointed when Germany delayed the move, saying it wanted to see more progress in talks with Kosovo.

EU foreign ministers recommended earlier this week that Serbia be granted the coveted status after saying it had fulfilled conditions set by the 27-nation bloc. The bloc's leaders routinely affirm such ministerial decisions.

Kosovo, which many Serbs consider the cradle of their statehood and religion, came under international control after the 1999 war in which NATO forces ejected Milosevic's troops.

Kosovo declared independence in 2008. Serbia refuses to recognize the move.

Although the EU has not set recognition of Kosovo as a formal requirement for Serbia's candidacy, it insists Serbia establish "good-neighborly relations" with its former province.

Over the past year, the two sides have been engaged in EU-mediated talks dealing mostly with practical matters such as recognizing each other's official documents. A key agreement reached last month allows Kosovo to represent itself in international

conferences and spell out the technical details of how Serbia and Kosovo will manage their joint borders and border crossings.

Candidate status is an initial step on the road to EU membership. Belgrade will still probably have to wait for about a year to open actual accession negotiations, which can then drag on for up to a decade.

The EU move would also be politically important for Serbia's pro-EU President Boris Tadic, whose party faces elections soon.

(Theodore Manggala Amarendra)