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[redacted] Middle East and North Africa Situation Report as of 08 October 2012 [redacted]

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08 October 2012
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[redacted] A car bomb yesterday detonated near Syrian police headquarters in Damascus,
[redacted] The explosion killed one officer and witnesses reported heavy gunfire,

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[redacted] **Syria/Opposition:** The Syrian National Council (SNC) as of yesterday said it will convene in Doha later this month to select a new chairperson and members of the executive board, and to create new committees [redacted] An SNC executive board member said new elections will be held only four months after SNC Chairman Abdulbasit Seyda was elected because new political groups and dignitaries have recently joined the SNC, and members want to increase SNC credibility.

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(U) This report was prepared by the Office of Middle East and North Africa Analysis. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, Middle East Task Force, MENA [redacted]

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[redacted] **Syria/Iranian Hostages:** [redacted] the Free Syrian Army (FSA) affiliated al-Bara Brigade yesterday extended the deadline it set on Thursday for a "short period" in response to a request from unspecified "Arab mediators" to allow time for negotiations to proceed. The al-Bara Brigade [redacted] had threatened to start killing the hostages—who were abducted in Damascus on 4 August—unless the Syrian regime released opposition detainees and stopped attacks against civilians.

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- [redacted] Iran is seeking regional assistance to resolve the situation. Foreign Minister Salehi on Saturday urged his Qatari, Syrian, and Turkish counterparts to facilitate the release of the hostages [redacted] Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jasim al-Thani in reference to the hostage situation on Sunday said that Qatar does not accept the killing of prisoners [redacted]

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[redacted] **Syria/Qatar:** Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jasim al-Thani [redacted] in reference to the Iranian hostage situation that Qatar does not accept the killing of prisoners and the further escalation of the situation in Syria [redacted]

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[redacted] **Syria/Turkey:** [redacted] Turkish and Syrian forces traded mortar rounds across their borders for the 11th straight day. Syrian artillery shells landed in the southeastern Turkish border village of Akcakale, where five civilians were killed last week in a strike that provoked a counter-attack from Turkey. One of the artillery shells landed near a storage facility of the Turkish Office of Soil Products. No reports of casualties at this time, [redacted]

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[redacted] Turkish Ministry of Disaster and Emergency Management Directorate (AFAD) and the Turkish Red Crescent yesterday began providing humanitarian assistance to Syrian refugees at a fifth assistance location next to the Syrian border, [redacted] AFAD said that the new assistance location, in Akcakale, was established to help meet the basic needs of Syrian refugees.

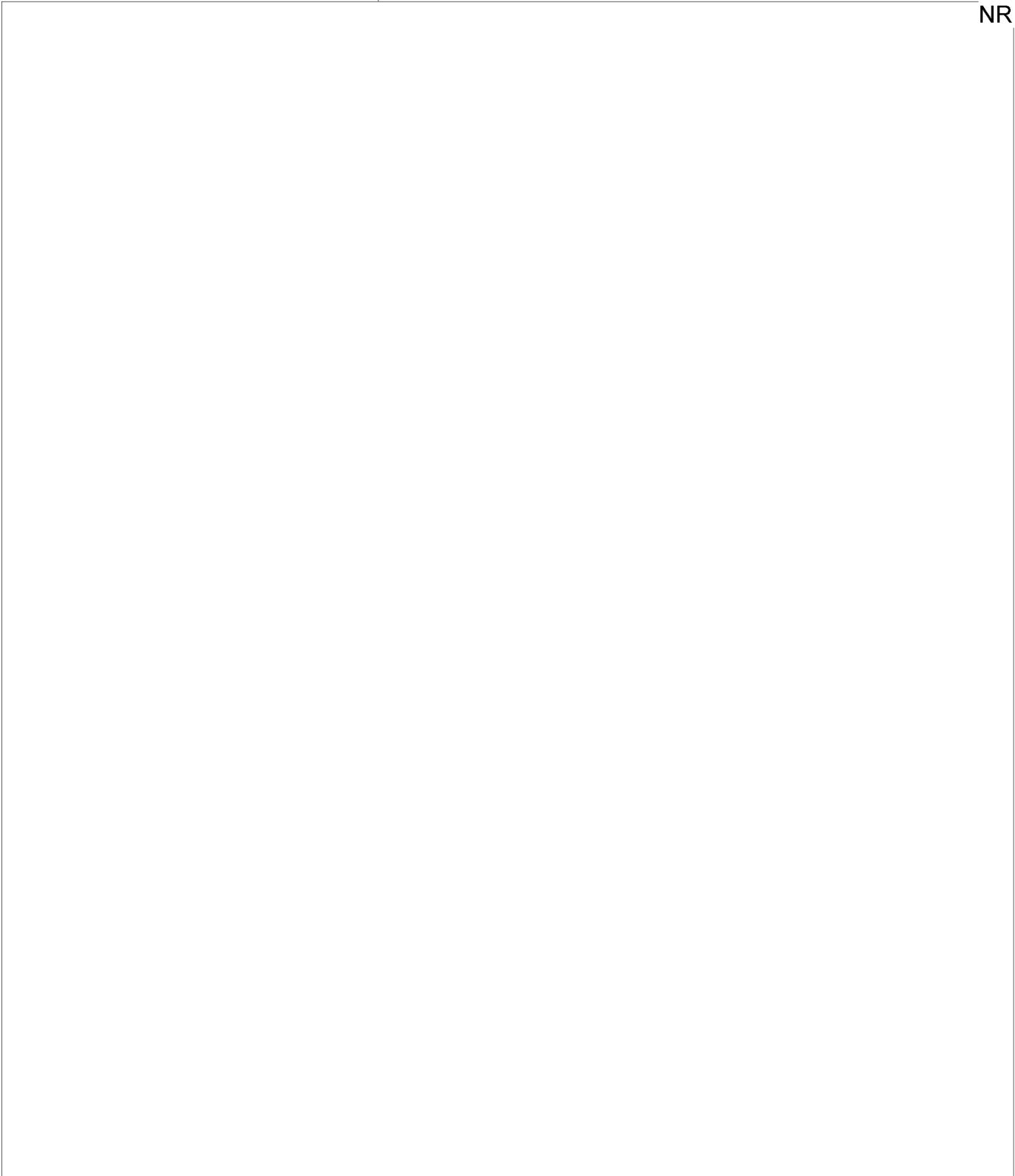
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