

## Headlines:

- **Russia's Syria Narrative Melting Away**
- **Tunisia in Crisis**
- **Turkey-based TV Airs Tapes on Jerusalem**

## Details:

### Russia's Syria Narrative Melting Away

Following a deadly attack on Russia's base in Syria on December 31<sup>st</sup> which killed at least two servicemen and damaged or destroyed aircraft based there, it now seems the base is coming under attack on a fairly regular basis according to reports. On January 6th, 2017, reports of another attack on the base began emerging, this one supposedly coming from weaponized drones. All of this comes from after Russian President Vladimir Putin's announcement a month ago, where he announced Russia was beginning to shrink its forces as the Bashar al-Assad regime had been saved and job was well done. The level of sophistication in the attacks, in what is a regime controlled area and the use of weaponized drones indicates a level of capability which is well beyond the weaponry provided to the usual rebel groups.

### Tunisia in Crisis

One person was killed on Monday 8 January during clashes between security forces and protesters in a Tunisian town, the government said, as demonstrations over rising prices and tax hikes spread in the North African country. A man was killed during a protest against government austerity measures 40 kilometres west of Tunis, the Interior Ministry said in a statement. The protest turned violent when security forces tried stopping some youths from burning down a government building, witnesses said. Five people were wounded and taken to a hospital, state news agency TAP said. Protests against rising prices and tax increases spread to around 10 towns across Tunisia. Tunisia has received much praise after the Arab spring as the only nation who has not fallen into a civil war and maintained its secular constitution. But successive governments have continued with the failed policies of Ben Ali and now run the country into the ground. Ben Ali and his cronies for decades failed to develop the economy, his students are now back in power and continuing with the same failed policies.

### Turkey-based TV Airs Tapes on Jerusalem

A Turkey-based TV station has released audio recordings it said were of an Egyptian intelligence officer asking influential hosts in Egypt to persuade their viewers to accept a US decision to recognise Jerusalem as the Zionist capital. The recordings in Arabic, aired by Mekamaleen TV were first reported on by the *New York Times* and appeared to contradict Egypt's public condemnation of the US move. Mekamaleen TV is an Istanbul-based free-to-air satellite television channel, run mostly by exiled Egyptians. In the audio recordings, a man the *Times* identified as Captain Ashraf el-Khoji tells the hosts that war with 'Israel' was not in Egypt's national interest, and asked them to play down opposition to US President Donald Trump's move. Egypt's State Information Service has denied the claims. In a call with Saeed Hasaseen, a TV host and member of parliament, el-Kholi said he was laying out "the stance of Egypt's national security apparatus and it stands to benefit from in this matter of announcing Jerusalem to be the capital of Israel." "We like all our Arab brothers are denouncing this matter," el-Kholi continued. "After that, this thing will become a reality....Palestinians can't resist, and we don't want to go to war. We have enough on our plate as you know."