**Regional News Story 1**

Name: Vaibhavi Hemasundar

Group: Yellow 5

Region: SWANA

Topic: Mass grave discovered in Palmyra

Article: [Syria: Mass grave uncovered in recaptured Palmyra](http://www.cnn.com/2016/04/02/middleeast/syria-war-palmyra/)

Date: 4/2/2016

Source: CNN

In May of last year, ISIS stormed into the ancient city of Palmyra and took control. Last week, on March 27th, Syrian forces recaptured Palmyra, and have since tried to assess how much damage has been caused in the area. They recently discovered a mass grave holding at least 40 bodies including many women and children-- some showing signs of beheading and torture. The findings in the grave are thought to be only a fraction of the hundreds of people ISIS killed since they stormed into Palmyra last May. Palmyra is a city of ancient ruins that has been recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site due to the past Greek, Roman, *and* Persian influences on the art and architecture that put the city at a cultural crossroads. In addition to the killings, ISIS also destroyed the 1800 year old Arch of Triumph and the nearly 2000 year old Temple of Baalshamin. The Syrian government has been involved in a war with militant groups like ISIS for 5 years that has resulted in 250,000 deaths, 1,000,000 injuries, and millions of displaced people.

ISIS is wreaking havoc on innocent people and destroying major cultural remains. This may only be happening in one region of the world right now, but ISIS is starting to spread into areas like Europe as well. We have to put a stop on this now because once they start setting up bases around the world, it will become that much more difficult.

How could this connect to Shakespeare?

I cannot think of any ways that I could connect this article to Shakespeare.

**Regional News Story 2**

Name: Vaibhavi

Group: Yellow 5

Region: SWANA

Topic: Ex-wife of ISIS leader

Article: [Ex-wife of ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi: I want a new life in Europe](http://www.cnn.com/2016/03/31/europe/abu-bakr-al-baghdadi-isis-ex-wife-interview/)

Date: 4/1/2016

Source: CNN

In a recent interview, Saja al-Dulaimi, the ex-wife of ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, discusses her short-lived marriage to Baghdadi and how it still affects her life and will affect the life of her child. Dulaimi was married off to Baghdadi in 2008. At this point he was a teacher. She states that he was definitely a family man. Baghdadi had one more wife with whom he had kids, and Dulaimi says that he was “the children’s ideal father”. However, she didn’t talk to him much because he had a “mysterious personality”. Mia Bloom, a professor at Georgia State University and a terrorism expert, believes that it’s possible that Baghdadi was hiding a secret life and identity from Dulaimi. Dulaimi says she ran away from Baghdadi after finding out she was pregnant because “[she] wasn’t happy”, and she didn’t love him. Now, Dulaimi is worried for her daughter’s safety. She wants to move to Europe and restart her life there, as she says it’s a better and safer life. However, she is still afraid for the child’s safety. According to Bloom, she has good reason to be afraid as there is threat from both ISIS forces and forces opposing ISIS that might takes things out on the leader’s kin. Dulaimi was arrested in late 2014 for crossing the border into Lebanon from Syria, as she was suspected of being a terrorist. She was later traded back for Lebanese hostages captured on the “al Nusra” front. Al Nusra is another terrorist organization. Dulaimi has ties to them as well. Her brother is a senior member of al Nusra and her new husband is suspected of being a part of it. This makes people brand Dulaimi as a terrorist even more. She says that she is “far from that”, and she could have stayed with Baghdadi if she wanted to and had plenty of money, but what she wants much more is freedom.

I believe that even though we have no proof that Dulaimi was/is assisting Baghdadi, she should have the benefit of the doubt. If she is innocent, it’s sad that she has to be so afraid for her life and her child’s just because of a short-lived, arranged marriage that she was thrown into. I think she deserves a second chance in Europe, but of course, there will always be the fear and the threat hanging over her head that will never really go away.

How could this connect to Shakespeare?

This story could tie in to Macbeth really well! The film could alternate between Baghdadi and Dulaimi’s point of views. It could show Baghdadi’s transition from teacher to terrorist and why he did it (maybe three people that planted the idea in his head like the witches). Instead of the wife helping him, the film could focus on Dulaimi trying to distance herself from everything and start fresh.

**Regional News Story 3**

Name: Vaibhavi

Group: Yellow 5

Region: SWANA

Topic: First family leaving from US under Obama’s surge resettlement program

Article: [First Syrians leave for US under surge resettlement program](http://www.foxnews.com/world/2016/04/06/first-syrians-leave-for-us-under-surge-resettlement-program.html)

Date: 4/6/2016

Source: Fox News

On 4/6/2016, Ammad al-Abboud, his wife, and his five children were the first Syrians to leave for the US under Obama’s surge resettlement program. This program was set to speed up the process of bringing Syrians seeking refuge to the US. Obama hopes that this program will help him reach his goal of resettling 10,000 Syrians to the US by September 30th. In February, a temporary “surge” center was set up in Amman, Jordan to speed up the resettlement process due to the large number of Syrian refugees there at the moment (about 635,000 are currently registered with the UN Refugee Agency). Jordan is where al-Abboud left from. He has lived there in refuge for the past 3 years and is grateful for their hospitality but is looking forward to a better life in the United States.

I think it’s great that America is making this possible for Syrian refugees! Everyone deserves to feel safe at home.

How could this connect to Shakespeare?

I do not know enough about Shakespeare at this point to make a connection.