

WHO Urges Sufficient Funding to Deal With Syria, Iraq Crises

NEW YORK (Press TV) – The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned of the deteriorating health condition in Syria and Iraq due to lack of funds.

“We have now reached a level in which we are very worried of the possibility that we could not continue to offer services and support due to the scarcity of funding,” The WHO’s regional director for the Eastern Mediterranean, Ala Alwan, said on Tuesday.

“Ongoing developments have very negative effects on the public health, negatively affecting all health programs,” Ala Alwan was quoted as saying on the sidelines of the 16th World Conference on Tobacco and Health in the United Arab Emirates’ capital city of Abu Dhabi.

Alwan also warned of the possibility of a spread of infectious diseases as well as widespread chronic illnesses.

“The spread of diseases in Syria or Iraq will endanger all regional countries,” Alwan said, “The longer

we wait, the more critical the situation becomes for those who need urgent, life-saving health services.”

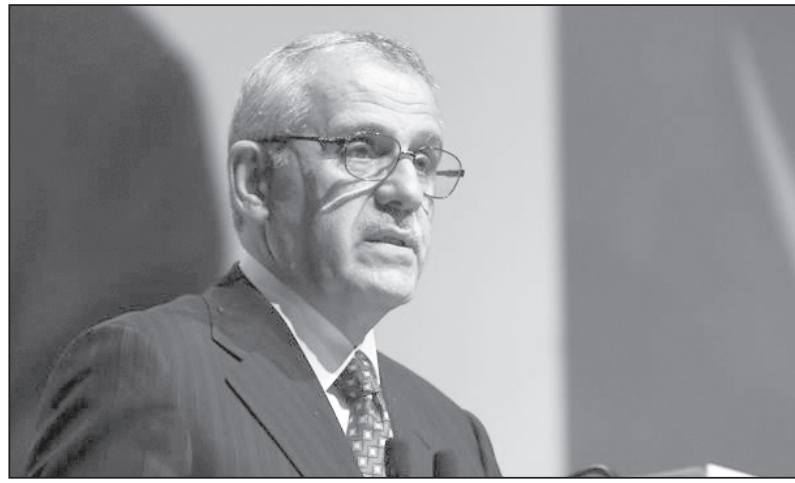
Last month, the WHO appealed for one billion dollars in additional funding to help provide life-saving health services to millions in need in Syria, Iraq, the Central African Republic and South Sudan. More than half of the requested funds is needed for Syria alone.

Alwan said the situation in war-torn Syria is “very worrying,” due to a shortage of donor funds.

Referring to the disrupted aid programs by the donors, Alwan said, “There are major problems linked to the difficulty in reaching large sectors of the Syrian society to offer basic health services.”

According to a recent report by the UN, the country’s deadly violence, which began in March 2011, has driven nearly four million Syrians from their country since the beginning of the crisis, and internally displaced 7.6 million civilians.

Alwan also described the situation



The WHO regional director for the Eastern Mediterranean, Ala Alwan

in Syria’s conflict-ridden neighbor, Iraq, as “alarming,” saying that USD 314.2 million is necessary for the Iraqi health sector to perform its role.

“Our efforts are hindered by insufficient funding,” the WHO official said.

A day after announcing that over five million people were in dire

need of medical services in Iraq, Alwan also said, “We urge the international donor community to act immediately to allow us to continue our work.”

The ISIL Takfiri terrorists, who have overrun large swathes of the two neighboring countries, have forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes.

Senior Houthi Member Gunned Down in Yemeni Capital

SANAA (AP) – Unidentified gunmen have assassinated a senior member of Yemen’s Houthi movement in the capital, Sana’a.

Security officials confirmed Wednesday that Abdul Karim al-Khiwani was attacked by gunmen on a motorbike earlier in the day.

Khiwani was a member of the Ansarullah movement’s Revolutionary Committee in charge of administering the affairs of the capital, Sana’a.

Al-Massira television channel, which is run by the Houthis, confirmed the death of the senior leader. Another leading member of the Houthis, Mohamed al-Bekheiti,

said the assassination took place on Sana’a Street, where Khiwani’s house is located.

Mohamed al-Khiwani, the son of the slain leader, said armed men left his father in “a pool of blood” in front of his home and escaped. He was transferred to hospital but died of excessive bleeding.

Abdul Karim al-Khiwani, also a top journalist and a respected writer, was a representative of Ansarullah movement in the UN-sponsored national talks which concluded January last year. The meetings ended in a peace plan which divided Yemen into six federative regions. Houthis

strongly opposed the initiative and continued fighting until they took control of the capital in September.

No group has yet claimed responsibility for Khiwani’s assassination, although some analysts believe that forces loyal to Yemeni fugitive President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi may have been behind the killing.

Yemeni fugitive President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi

Hadi, along with the cabinet of Premier Khaled Bahah, stepped down in late January, but the Yemeni parliament did not approve the president’s resignation. He fled his home in Sana’a on February 21

after weeks under effective house arrest and went to Aden, Yemen’s second largest city, where he officially withdrew his resignation and highlighted his intention to resume duties.

Some Persian Gulf Arab states, including Saudi Arabia, have already relocated their embassies from Sana’a to Aden.

Hadi also called on the Ansarullah revolutionaries to relinquish power and leave Sana’a. The Houthis, however, said Hadi had lost his legitimacy as head of state and was being sought as a fugitive from justice.

Lawyer for Doctor in Bin Laden Operation Killed in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (Press TV) – Police authorities in Pakistan say a former lawyer for the Pakistani doctor who helped Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) agents hunt former al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, has been shot dead in Pakistan’s troubled northwestern province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The officials said unidentified assailants opened fire at the lawyer, identified as Samiullah Afridi, late Tuesday when he was return-

ing to his home on the outskirts of the provincial capital of Peshawar, located approximately 190 kilometers (118 miles) northwest of the capital, Islamabad.

He was representing Dr. Shakil Afridi, who was convicted in May 2012 of “conspiring against the state” by giving money and providing medical treatment to terrorists, not for helping the CIA with a fake vaccination campaign to capture bin Laden. Afridi was initially

sentenced to 33 years in jail, but the sentence was later commuted to 10 years.

The lawyer fled to the United Arab Emirates in December 2013 due to threats from terrorists, but had been occasionally visiting Pakistan while keeping a low profile.

Last year, Afridi announced that he had stopped working on the doctor’s case.

Senior police officer Shakir Khan

said the lawyer had only recently returned to Pakistan after having spent three months abroad.

Pakistani security forces have launched an investigation to determine the motive behind the killing.

Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) splinter group, Jundullah, later claimed responsibility for the deadly attack on Afridi.

a DNA test to officially confirm the identity of the corpse before its hasty burial.

Non-OPEC... (Continued From Page One)

negotiations began, was 2.6 million bpd. OPEC in a readout of the Iranian economy said gross domestic product during third quarter 2014 grew by 4.6%, accelerating from the 2.2% decline in the first quarter and the 3.8% recovery for the second quarter.

Since March 2014, the start of the Iranian calendar year, the Iranian economy added nearly 400,000 new jobs, OPEC said in its report.

Iran under the terms of a November 2013 agreement is allowed some oil exports in exchange for commitments to curb some of its nuclear research activity.

Sanctions against Iran may be revised if there’s a breakthrough during the current round of talks.

The budget for the current Iranian year, which ends later this week, relies on oil for 39.3% of government revenues. Drafts for next year call for a six percent decline in oil dependency.

Zangeneh said Monday he was confident the oil and natural gas sector would experience a period of prosperity in the coming calendar year.

No Sign... (Continued From Page One)

been resolved and, in the meantime, political discussions on sanctions continue,” she added.

Afkham did not confirm a new round of talks next week.

“We should wait and see how this round goes and what the schedule will be like until the last day,” she said.

On Tuesday, the United States said the chances of clinching a political framework agreement by the end of March were 50-50.

The sides then aim to have a full deal by July 1.

However, defying administration threats to veto the bill, Sen. Bob Corker (R – TN), the chair of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, intends to move forward with a bill aimed at giving Congress the power to stop any nuclear deal with Iran.

Sen. Corker says the plan is to begin committee mark-up of the legislation on either Tuesday or Wednesday of next week, with a hope of getting the bill done by March 25.

The timing is because of a soft deadline set by international negotiators for the final nuclear deal with Iran, with Corker hoping to preempt this.

Sen. Corker conceded that it is all but impossible for the bill to actually get to the Senate floor before the Easter break. Making any progress at all would bring the issue once again to the fore, and ideally to sabotage the talks.

While most of the Senate Republicans are in favor of anything that would kill the talks, getting a veto-proof majority is likely to be difficult. Still, a handful of Democrats have said they will support such a bill.

Senate Republicans, as well as some Democrats, have warned that they want congressional review of any nuclear deal with Iran. The White House has countered that the Senate has the right to review treaties and not a nuclear agreement. The dispute has become a consequential flashpoint between the Obama administration and the GOP majority on Capitol Hill.

Corker also warned that he had to work out scheduling the markup of his legislation with ranking member Robert Menendez (D-N.J.), who led a group of 10 Democrats in vowing not to move on the Corker legislation until March 24.

The Corker-Menendez bill is widely seen as the favorite of GOP leadership — there is a separate measure that would impose new sanctions on Iran — and would give Congress two months to review a nuclear deal with Iran before deciding whether to accept, reject or do nothing with it.

Iran... (Continued From Page One)

regime of Israel over its building of settlements in the West Bank and its military operations in the Gaza Strip.

“Netanyahu’s statements regarding our future should only motivate us to continue our struggle” before the ICC and in other venues, Saidam said.

Saeb Erekat, a member of the Palestinian Liberation Organization’s executive committee, urged the international community to stand behind Palestinian efforts to bring their struggle before the ICC “and through all other peaceful means”.

“The results of the Israeli elections show the success of a campaign platform based on settlements, racism, apartheid and the denial of the fundamental human rights of the Palestinian people,” he said in a statement.

Mustafa Barghouti, a prominent Palestinian politician, said Netanyahu’s re-election following his declaration on the Palestinian state amounted to the abandonment of any chance for peace.

“Israel has chosen apartheid rather than peace, thus bringing an end to the peace camp in Palestine,” he said.

Jordanian senator and former minister, Alaa Batayneh, said that Netanyahu’s victory was definitely detrimental to Palestinian statehood. “Mr. Netanyahu’s actions in the past few days confirmed what we have been saying for years: that we don’t have an Israeli party for peace,” he said.

Netanyahu’s polarizing stances “will escalate matters”, he said, adding that the Zionist PM’s recent speech to the U.S. Congress, in which he warned against international rapprochement with Iran over its nuclear program, showed Netanyahu “is going it alone, against all logic and reason”.

Hamid Reza Taraghi, the head of international affairs for Iran’s conservative Islamic Coalition Party, said the victor in the Israeli elections was irrelevant to Iranians.

“Whether Netanyahu or another individual, he will enjoy the U.S. support and naturally on the nuclear issue the U.S. will consult with the leaders of this regime,” he said.

If anything, though, he said the election of Netanyahu favored Iran because the prime minister’s staunch right-wing positions would “quicken the process” of the Zionist regime’s collapse.

Lebanon’s Hezbollah, with which the occupying regime of Israel fought a war in 2006, has yet to give any official response. But two dailies close to the resistance movement decried Netanyahu’s victory.

Al-Akhbar ran a front-page headline that read “Israel Holds on to Extremism,” while Assafir titled its main election story, “The New Knesset: Racial Discrimination Triumphs”.

Many Palestinians and others in the Middle East expressed a measure of apathy, saying the election never had a chance to change the dynamic of the Israeli-Palestinian relationship, regardless of how it turned out.

Environmental... (Continued From Page 2)

land and water grabbing, and the large-scale acquisition of public land and water resources for private use and profit. Further, he underscored the importance of public education and engagement.

This is all an encouraging start, but the scale of the challenge is huge. Dramatic change is required in both public perceptions and the whole way in which government manages the environment.

The department of the environment does not have equal standing with more powerful bodies in charge of development projects, such as the ministry of energy, the ministry of roads and urban development, and the oil ministry. Yet despite environmental issues often being marginalized, the department of environment bears the brunt of criticism when problems occur. And business as usual tends to return once an immediate crisis subsides.

Recognition of environmental problems at the apex of Iran’s political power structure can provide a spur to a long-overdue reform. An overarching national environmental plan, with strong legal backing, is critical to ending a fruitless blame game among state bodies. Such a plan could shift Iran away from responding to crises with last-minute panicky solutions towards tackling the social, economic, and political roots of problems.

Iran risks an alarming future of drying rivers and wetlands, declining groundwater, deforestation, soil degradation, biodiversity losses, dimming haze, and dust storms rising from parched lands. But the unprecedented sense of urgency in Iran’s political leadership presents an opportunity for officials, activists and all Iranians to improve the shaken balance between humans and nature.

Zionist Regime’s Hospitals Treat Injured ISIL Terrorists

WEST BANK (FNA) – The Zionist regime opened its doors with Syria in order to provide medical treatment to the gunmen of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), al-Nusra Front, Al-Qaeda Takfiri groups who were wounded in the ongoing fighting against the Syrian army, a prominent American newspaper reported.

The Wall Street Journal reported that al-Nusra Front “hasn’t bothered Israel since seizing the border area last summer” along the Golan Heights.

Those Takfiri elements “who control some two-thirds to 90% of the border on the Golan aren’t attacking Israel. This gives you some basis to think that they understand who is their real enemy - maybe it isn’t Israel”, Amos Yadlin, the former military intelligence chief, is quoted by The Wall Street Journal as saying, Al-Manar reported.

The fact that the Israeli-Syria border area along the occupied Golan Heights has remained largely quiet has sparked accusations that the Takfiri operatives are backed by the Zionist entity.

“Some in Syria joke: ‘How can you say that Al-Qaeda doesn’t have an air force? They have the Israeli air force’,” Assad told Foreign Affairs magazine earlier this year. “They are supporting the rebels in Syria. It is very clear.”

The Wall Street Journal quoted “an Israeli military official” who said that most of those treated were armed rebels fighting the regime.

“We don’t ask who they are, we don’t do any screening,” the official said. “Once the treatment is done, we take them back to the border and they go on their way.”

Syria was hit by a violent unrest since mid-March 2011, where the western media reports accuse countries, mainly the US, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar of orchestrating the conflict in the country and providing terrorist groups with money, weapons and trained mercenaries.

On May 2011, Syrian army launched a wide-scale operation against armed groups and gunmen operating in the country, who started to escape the army blows and infiltrate illegally to Lebanon.