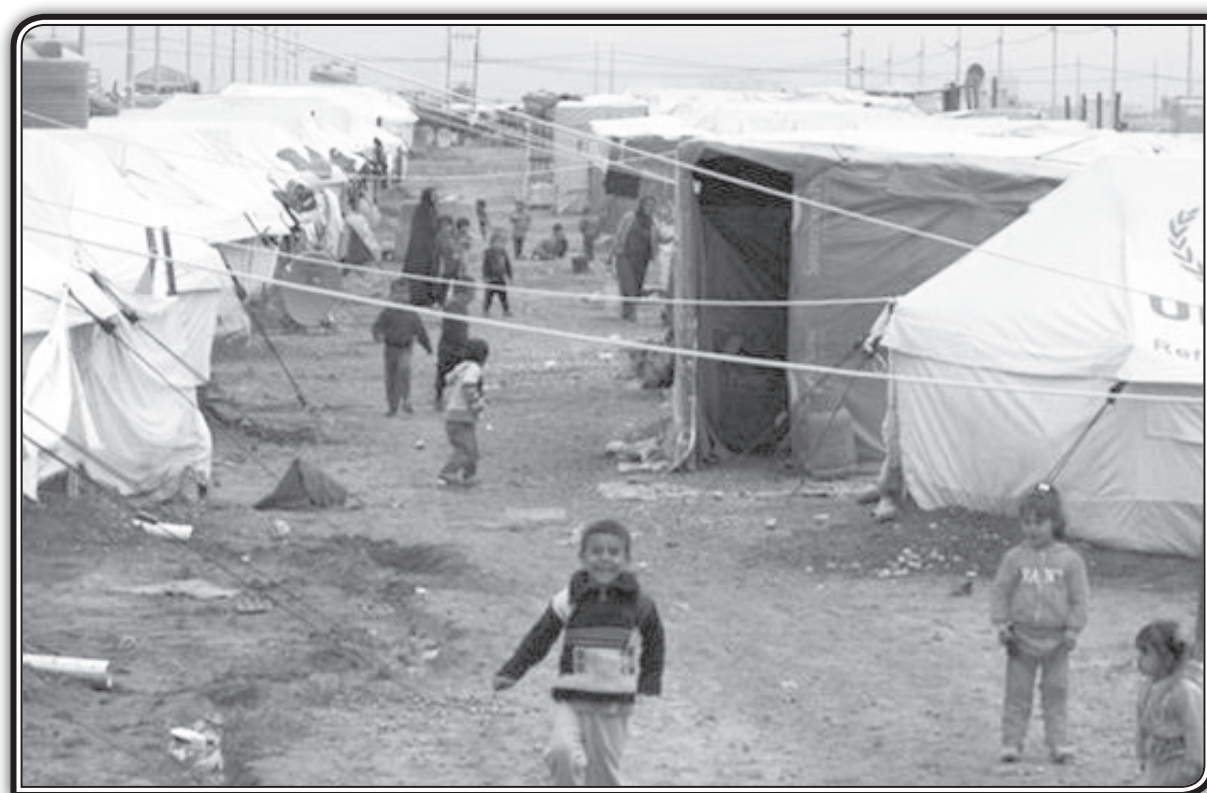


*SANAA (Dispatches) – France says a female French citizen working for an international organization in Yemen has been abducted in the capital, Sana'a. According to a statement issued by the French Foreign Ministry, the abduction took place on Tuesday. France is doing all in its power to find and free the woman, the ministry said, calling on all French "compatriots to leave the country as fast as possible."*

*Patience is of two kinds: patience over what pains you, and patience against what you covet.*

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

## UN: Displaced Iraqi Families in Worrying Situation



*Displaced Iraqi children, who fled from ISIL violence in Mosul, play in a refugee camp on the outskirts of the Kurdish city of Erbil.*

**NEW YORK (Dispatches) – The situation of the Iraqi families recently displaced from the al-Baghdadi district in the western province of Anbar is alarming, the United Nations says.**

About 200 families have reportedly been evacuated from a residential compound near Ain al-Asad air base after Iraqi

security forces flushed out the ISIL Takfiri terrorists from the compound. The families have been airlifted to the Iraqi capital, Baghdad.

The evacuated families had been living under the Takfiri group's siege and had limited access to food, water and medicine. At least five children

have died of the dire living conditions in the area, according to reports.

"The situation facing these families is very worrying. They have been under siege for days and are highly vulnerable. We're coordinating closely with the government to help them," the United Nations

Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General Lise Grande said on Tuesday.

On February 21, Iraqi troops, supported by local tribal fighters, managed to break the week-long siege on the residential compound in al-Baghdadi.

The ISIL siege, which had blocked the access of hundreds of families to food and medical supplies, was imposed after Iraqi security forces managed to retake the center of al-Baghdadi from the Takfiri terrorists earlier this month.

"UNHCR and its partners will continue to assess the needs of these newly-displaced families to ensure that their many vulnerabilities are addressed; including the need for psychosocial counselling, legal assistance, family kits, and cash assistance for the most vulnerable," said Neill Wright, the representative of the United Nations refugee agency, UNHCR.

According to the UN, in excess of 380,000 Iraqis are currently displaced within Anbar Province.

The extremist group started its campaign of terror in Iraq in early June 2014.

## Another US Lawmaker Will Boycott Netanyahu Speech to Congress

**WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – A Democratic US lawmaker from Tennessee says he will boycott Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's speech to Congress next month.**

Rep. Steve Cohen called the address a "very dangerous game" and "political gamesmanship" by House Speaker John Boehner to undermine President Barack Obama.

Cohen, who is Jewish, said Tuesday the planned speech about Iran's nuclear program is "high theater" in Netanyahu's re-election campaign.

"The actions of the speaker and the prime minister have caused a breach between Democrats in Congress and Israel as well as the administrations of the United States and Israel," Cohen wrote in a press release.

"This speech is high theater for a re-election campaign in Israel and a political tool wielded against our president and his administration by the speaker of the House," he added. "It endangers the negotiations [and] insults the good faith of the other nations involved in the negotiations."

Netanyahu is set to address the

US Congress on March 3 to persuade American lawmakers to put additional sanctions against Iran while nuclear negotiations are under way.

Cohen argued that providing such a forum to Netanyahu, "who is opposing our nation's foreign policy is beyond the pale."

US Vice President Joe Biden and several other Democratic lawmakers, including Earl Blumenauer and Barbara Lee, have already announced their decision to boycott the speech.

The White House has also denounced the invitation of Netanyahu to Congress as a "breach of protocol" that could derail the nuclear talks with Iran.

Iran and the P5+1 group – Britain, France, China, Russia, and the United States plus Germany – have been holding talks to reach a comprehensive agreement over the Islamic Republic's nuclear energy program.

The United States and its allies have imposed several rounds of illegal sanctions on Iran based on the unfounded accusation that Tehran is pursuing non-civilian objectives in its nuclear program.

## Taliban Reject Reports of Talks With Kabul



*The file photo shows Taliban members in Afghanistan.*

**KABUL (Press TV) – The Taliban militants in Afghanistan have rejected recent reports suggesting that they agreed to hold preliminary peace talks with the government in Kabul.**

According to the Afghan Khaama Press online newspaper, the militant group denied the reports in a statement released on Tuesday.

"There have been many rumors swirling around in the media lately about the latest developments in Afghanistan and negotiations with the Kabul administration. These are nothing more than the views and assumptions of these outlets," said Taliban's spokesman, Zabullah Mujahid.

On Monday, the chief executive in Afghanistan's unity government, Abdullah Abdullah, said during a cabinet meeting that he had received assurance from Pakistan, where Taliban leaders are based, that the militant group was willing to hold talks with the Afghan government.

Sources close to Taliban have also noted that the group's leadership has approved preliminary peace talks with Kabul

in a bid to find a solution to the chaos in the country.

Earlier this week, Mujahid confirmed that talks on a possible peace deal will be held between representatives of Taliban and the United States in Qatar.

Sources close to the militants say that the representative in Qatar is also expected to visit Pakistan to hold talks on a peace deal.

Earlier this month, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani said he was optimistic regarding peace talks with the militant group.

The United States and its allies invaded Afghanistan in 2001 as part of Washington's so-called war on terror. The offensive removed Taliban from power, but after more than 13 years, insecurity remains the order of the day across the country.

The US-led combat mission in Afghanistan ended on December 31, 2014. However, at least 13,500 foreign forces, mainly from the United States, have remained in the country in what the US is calling a support mission.

Many civilians have lost their lives since the US-led invasion.

## Amnesty Raps Zionist Regime for Crimes Against Palestinians

**LONDON (Dispatches) – Amnesty International has lashed out at the Zionist regime for committing war crimes against Palestinians, slamming the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the international community for failing to protect citizens against violence.**

Amnesty's Secretary General Shalil Shetty made the remarks in a 415-page annual report of the group on Wednesday, focusing on Israeli crimes against Palestinians and on violence against people by armed groups in the world, especially in Syria, Iraq, and Nigeria.

Pointing to the Tel Aviv regime's atrocities against Palestinians, Shetty said in the report that the July 2014 Israeli assault on Gaza which claimed more than 2,000 lives - at least 1,500 of them ci-

vilians - was "marked by callous indifference and involved war crimes."

Referring to the ISIL terrorists, Amnesty's Secretary General Shalil Shetty said in the report that the Takfiri group "has been responsible for war crimes in Syria, [and] has carried out abductions, execution-style killings and ethnic cleansing on a massive scale in northern Iraq."

In the past four years, the report said, more than 200,000 people have died in Syria - overwhelmingly civilians - and around 4 million Syrian people are now refugees in other countries. Another 7.6 million are displaced inside Syria, the report added.

As for conflicts in other regions, the report also mentioned atroci-

ties by Boko Haram in Nigeria as well as the sectarian violence in the Central African Republic and South Sudan.

The report blamed the international community for paying "lip services to the importance of protecting civilians" and still failing to protect them. "Amnesty International believes that this can and must finally change," it said.

The group also criticized world governments for "pretending the protection of civilians is beyond their power."

The report by Amnesty International criticized the UNSC, saying the UN body has "miserably failed" to protect civilians.

The five permanent members of the UNSC "consistently abused" their veto power to "promote their

political self-interest or geopolitical interest above the interest of protecting civilians," it said.

The UNSC is one of the principal organs of the United Nations and according to the UN Charter, its responsibility is to maintain international peace and security

Its five permanent members that are world's main powers - namely Britain, China, France, Russia and the US - have the "veto" power which can prevent adoption of any resolution.

Amnesty international in the report called on the five states to give up their veto power in cases where genocide and other mass killings are being committed, saying such an action would give the UN a better opportunity to save civilian lives in conflicts.

## Ukraine President Reaches Deal to Buy Arms From UAE

**KIEV (Press TV) – Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko has reportedly reached an agreement for the purchase of weapons from the Persian Gulf country of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which is itself one of the largest purchasers of US arms in the Middle East.**

Speaking Tuesday at the International Defense Exhibition and Conference in Abu Dhabi, Poroshenko did not, however, specify the volume or the type of weaponry Ukraine would purchase from the UAE but said they would help Kiev protect its territory from the pro-Russia forces.

The arms deal, according to press reports, was struck with the crown prince of Abu Dhabi and deputy supreme commander of the UAE Armed Forces, Mohammed bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. However, UAE officials have not yet commented on the deal.

The Ukrainian president said following a meeting with top UAE officials that military technical-cooperation agreements were signed to bolster Ukraine's arms industry, which he said would secure several export orders.

He further described the deals as "extremely important so we have the money to modernize our armed forces."

Kiev has been calling on its Western backers for months to provide it with lethal weapons but has been running into resistance, particularly from Germany, France and the UK, which fear an escalation and spread of the Ukrainian conflict.