

NEW YORK (Dispatches) – The United Nations has warned that any attempt made by the Zionist regime to annex Palestinian land will destroy further prospects of the so-called peace talks.

The UN's envoy for the Middle East, Nickolay Mladenov, gave the warning while addressing the UNSC which had met for the first time since the adoption of a resolution calling for an end to Israel's illegal settlement activities. Mladenov made the remarks in response to calls by several Zionist ministers for annexation of Palestinian land.

One, who enters the places of evil repute has no right to complain against a man who speaks ill of him.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

Iraqi Forces Liberate More Areas in Mosul

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – Iraqi security forces, in a major advancement in the large-scale operations to free the city of Mosul from Daesh terrorists, have declared the liberation of the Left Coast area in the east of the city.

The Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service (CTS) announced the development on Wednesday, saying security forces had already advanced way into the Left Coast — which is located on the east bank of the Tigris River — on Tuesday and a full liberation was expected.

In another development, an airstrike by the U.S.-led coalition purportedly fighting Daesh terrorists in Iraq has targeted a funeral ceremony in the city of Mosul, killing eight civilians.

Colonel Ahmed al-Jaboury, with the Nineveh Liberation Operation, said in a statement that the victims were killed as the U.S.-led coalition “mistakenly” hit the mourning ceremony in Shefaa neighborhood in western Mosul.

Separately, Saad Maan, the spokesman for the Baghdad Operations Command, said two



An Iraqi soldier patrols in Mosul's al-Jazair neighborhood, January 17, 2017.

bomb disposal engineers lost their lives as a car bomb they were trying to defuse accidentally detonated.

According to al-Sumaria news website, the car bomb went off in Abu Dashir area in southern Baghdad. According to the report, seven other people, including two police officers, were also injured.

Earlier on Tuesday, a car bomb attack in the same area claimed the lives of seven people and in-

jured 20 others.

In another development on Tuesday, the commander of the Nineveh Liberation Operation, Abdul Amir Yarallah, said a group of Daesh terrorists were killed in an Iraqi airstrike.

The air raid targeted the terrorists in Rashidiya area as they were fleeing from eastern Mosul to its west.

Mosul is the last urban area in Iraq that is still controlled by

Daesh. Large-scale operations are underway by the Iraqi military from several fronts to liberate the city.

The Daesh terrorists have recently increased their acts of violence across the country in revenge for the blows they have been suffering at the hands of Iraqi forces, particularly in the northern city of Mosul.

Daesh began its campaign of terror in northern and western Iraq in 2014. Iraqi army soldiers and allied fighters are leading military operations to win back terrorist-held regions.

In yet another development, a security source said nine police forces were killed in a Daesh attack on security checkpoints in eastern Salahuddin Province on Wednesday.

According to al-Sumaria, the attack reportedly targeted the security forces on the outskirts of Hamrin area near the Farhan Village in eastern Salahuddin.

Meanwhile, some reports said five police forces have been kidnapped by Daesh in the same province.

Syrian General, 8 Soldiers Killed in Terrorist Bomb Attack



An image grab taken from an AFPTV video released on January 7, 2017 shows people gathering amidst the debris at the site of a car bomb attack in the town of Azaz in northern Syria.

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – A Syrian general and eight troops have been killed in a terrorist bombing attack outside the capital city Damascus, says a UK-based monitoring group.

According to the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, the government forces were killed when an explosive device planted by terrorists went off in a tunnel in the town of Harasta, located to the northeast of the capital.

“The explosion killed a Syrian officer at the rank of general, and eight other members of the government forces, and wounded several people,” said the director of the observatory, Rami Abdel Rah-

man.

He noted that the death toll would probably rise as a number of the wounded were in critical condition and that 15 people were still unaccounted for.

The developments come as the Syrian government and opposition terrorists have announced the names of their delegation heads for the upcoming peace talks in Kazakhstan.

Syria's Ambassador to the UN Bashar al-Ja'afari was named as the head of the government's delegation for the intra-Syrian talks in Astana, scheduled for January 23. The talks would focus strictly on military developments and reinforcement of the ceasefire agreement brokered by Russia, Turkey, and Iran.

The Syrian government's delegation “will be led by Syrian diplomat and permanent representative to the United Nations Bashar al-Ja'afari,” said a report in Syria's Al-Watan daily, adding that the government's team will also include “figures representing the military and the Syrian judiciary, so that the delegation will represent the whole Syrian state.”

The foreign-sponsored terrorist groups will be represented by Mohammad Al-loush, the head of the political office of the so-called Jaish al-Islam terrorist group. Their delegation will also include some 20 other people.

The negotiations, which exclude the Daesh and Jabhat Fateh al-Sham terrorist groups, will be held in the wake of a nationwide ceasefire in Syria, which was endorsed by the UN Security Council on December 31.

Meanwhile, the United States vowed to step up support for the Turkish forces by conducting airstrikes in Syria's al-Bab, the American military spokesman for the so-called U.S.-led coalition against Daesh terrorists said.

U.S. Air Force Colonel John Dorrian added that four strikes had recently been conducted near the Syrian town.

“These strikes eliminated Daesh's capabilities around the forward line of enemy troops near the city,” Dorrian said. “This is something we expect to continue doing... Those targets were mutually developed, and we decided to strike them.”

The two countries' military officers “will continue to work in combined headquarters, de-conflicting, coordinating and developing targets to maximize effects against Daesh, and avoid negative effects on this complex and crowded battlefield.”

Syria has been fighting foreign-sponsored terrorism over the past almost six years. UN Special Envoy for Syria Staf-fan de Mistura estimated in August last year that more than 400,000 people had been killed in the Syrian crisis until then. The UN has stopped its official casualty count in Syria, citing its inability to verify the figures it receives from various sources.

Palestinian Factions Agree to Form Unity Gov't



Representatives of Palestinian political movements give a press conference in Moscow, Russia, January 17, 2017.

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – Leading Palestinian movements, Hamas and Fatah, have agreed to form a new unity government following extensive negotiations in Moscow, Russia.

The unity deal was announced late Tuesday, three days after the talks began under the Russian auspices among representatives from Ramallah-based Fatah as well as Hamas and Islamic Jihad, both headquartered in the Gaza Strip, and other factions.

Russia has been working towards conflict resolution in the region as part of the so-called Middle East Peace Quartet, also comprising the United States, the European Union and the United Nations.

“We have reached agreement under which, within 48 hours,

we will call on Mahmoud Abbas to launch consultations on the creation of a government,” Fatah official Azzam al-Ahmad told a press conference.

Abbas, who leads Fatah, will be carrying out the consultations in his capacity as the president of the Palestinian Authority (PA).

Moussa Abu Marzouk, the deputy chairman of Hamas' political bureau, also described a unity government as “the most effective tool” to address divisions among Palestinian groups, adding that “it is responsible to promote the solutions, including the holding of free and democratic elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.”

The official noted that an agreement between Fatah and Hamas to achieve Palestinian

unity is not considered a compromise by any means. The concept of unity, among all factions, is a win for all sides, rather than a loss, he said, adding, “Everybody will win.”

Fatah and Hamas have been at odds ever since the latter scored a landslide victory in Palestinian elections in 2006. Hamas governs the Gaza Strip, while Fatah has set up offices in the West Bank.

The factions agreed in April 2014 to end their grievances and reconcile. The move drew the Zionist regime's officials' ire, and the regime consequently responded by suspending the so-called peace talks with the PA.

Following the agreement, the two sides formed a unity government, which Fatah unilaterally dissolved in June 2015, claiming it was “weak,” and that Hamas would not “allow it to work in Gaza.”

In line with the new arrangements, the Palestinian sides involved in the Moscow talks, including Islamic Jihad, will now join institutions under the umbrella of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and form a new Palestinian National Council.

The new council will select the PLO Executive Committee, the top political and diplomatic Palestinian body.

In Post-Coup Crackdown Turkey Issues Arrest Warrants For 243 Military Personnel

ANKARA (Dispatches) – Turkish prosecutors have ordered the arrest of as many as 243 staff with the country's military over their alleged use of a messaging application, which Ankara associates with U.S.-based opposition cleric Fetullah Gulen.

The arrest warrants were issued on Wednesday as part of Ankara's ongoing crackdown on those suspected of having a hand in the failed July 2016 military coup.

The country's Anadolu news agency reported that the arrests will be made in operations in 54 provinces across the country.

Those sought are accused of using “Bylock,” an encrypted smartphone messaging application, which the government says had been used by the network tied to Gulen.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan's ally-turned-foe, Gulen is blamed by Ankara for orchestrating the abortive coup last July with the aim of unseating the head of state.

A sweeping manhunt has ensued, which has seen more than 41,000 being put in jail pending trial.



A Turkish soldier stands guard next to the courthouse as a vehicle transporting prisoners passes at Silivri District in Istanbul, December 27, 2016.