

# Airstrike Kills, Injures Scores In Afghanistan's Farah

KABUL (Dispatches) – At least eight Afghan civilians, including four children, have been killed and 22 more injured in a suspected airstrike in the Bala Boluk district of western Farah Province.

Families of the victims said the civilians were hit by an airstrike on Saturday, contradicting a report by the provincial governor spokesman Mohammad Naser Mehri, who said the casualties were the result of a roadside bomb explosion.

Authorities of a local hospital also said those wounded in the incident were taken there for medical treatment, noting that three of them are in critical condition.

Local Tolo news outlet further cited relatives of the victims as saying that all those killed and injured in the attack were civilians – most of the women and children.

According to the report, two army helicopters bombed a “convoy of civilians” as they were evacuating the area due to an ongoing military operation that recently began against militants in parts of the district.

The convoy was reportedly en route from a village in Bala Boluk to a safer place in the violence-hit district when it came under attack.

An official in the Farah Provincial Council also confirmed the air raid and the number of the casualties, while Defense Ministry Spokesman General



A file photo of an Afghan army attack helicopter

Dawlat Waziri said an investigation is underway into the incident.

In another development, at least 23 local elements of the Daesh terrorist group were reported killed in separate operations conducted in Zabul and Nangarhar provinces in southern and eastern Afghanistan.

Waziri said at least 17 loyalists of the terror group were killed in an operation conducted by the Special Forces in

Arghandab district of Zabul.

He added in a Friday briefing that the operations were conducted late on Thursday targeting the terrorists in Malik Khel village of Arghandab.

The official also stated that six Daesh affiliates were killed in an airstrike conducted in Lalpur district of Nangarhar province.

Afghanistan is grappling with insecurity since the 2001 U.S.-led

military invasion of the country as part of Washington's so-called war on terror, which removed the Taliban militant group from power.

However, many parts of the country remain plagued by militancy despite the presence of foreign troops.

In recent years, the Daesh terror group has also managed to gain a foothold in the country's east, further complicating Kabul's military operations.

## Daesh Lost Quarter of Captured Land in Iraq, Syria in 2016

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – The Daesh terrorist group lost last year a quarter of the territories it captured in Iraq and Syria, the Russian ambassador to Damascus says.

“In total for 2016, it has lost a quarter of previously occupied territories. Their total area has decreased from 78,000 to 60,400 square kilometers

[30,000 square miles to 23,000],” Alexander Kinshchak said,

The Russian envoy added that the Syrian government is in control of around 35 percent of the Arab Republic with a population of over 10 million.

“According to various estimates, the legitimate authorities at the

moment control about 35 percent of the country. This, I will note, are large cities and densely populated areas, which are home to 10 million people, a majority of the population of Syria,” Kinshchak said.

The Russian ambassador also said that the Jabhat Fatah al Sham terrorist group, formerly known as

al-Nusra Front, and its allies are controlling no more than 10-12 percent of the territory of Syria.

“Al-Nusra and its allies are holding no more than 10-12 percent of the country, whereas in 2015 they held sway over one fifth of Syria. This is first and foremost the province of Idlib,” Kinshchak added.

## To Discuss Embassy Relocation U.S. Congressmen to Visit Occupied Territories



Palestinian protesters hold placards during a demonstration against U.S. President Donald Trump's pledge to move the American embassy from Tel Aviv to al-Quds, in Rafah, southern Gaza Strip, January 24, 2017.

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – A member of the Zionist regime's parliament has claimed that a U.S. Congressional delegation will be visiting

the occupied territories to discuss with Zionist officials a highly-controversial plan to relocate the American embassy from Tel Aviv to al-Quds.

Yehuda Glick said on his Facebook page that the American delegates, including Chairman of the Congress Subcommittee on National Security Ron DeSantis and Congressman Dennis Ross, would make the trip.

According to Glick, during the 24-hour visit, the delegation members will meet with Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other officials “to discuss the practical and political implications of the embassy's transfer to Jerusalem (al-Quds).”

He further said that the Congressmen would also explore a potential new site for the U.S. diplomatic mission and may return to the U.S. “with an accurate analysis of the matter, in order to update the US administration and Congress.”

However, Congressman Ross has denied he would be taking part in such a visit. He told the Israeli TV channel i24NEWS that he “is actually not

attending this trip.”

U.S. President Donald Trump has pledged on numerous occasions — including personally to the Zionist premier in a meeting last September — to move the American embassy to al-Quds, in a sign of recognizing the city as the capital of a future Zionist “state.”

The controversial rhetoric and the prospect of its potential implementation, however, have sparked widespread condemnations, with critics warning that the move could wreck the chances of peace in the Middle East for good.

Palestinians are seeking to create an independent state in the territories of the West Bank, East al-Quds, and the Gaza Strip, with East al-Quds as its capital.

Palestinian Authority officials, including President Mahmoud Abbas, the United Nations, the Arab League, and even U.S. allies such as France have all criticized the potential U.S. embassy relocation.

## Jordan Executes 15 People, 10 for Terrorism Convictions

AMMAN (Reuters) – Jordan executed 15 people on Saturday including 10 convicted on terrorism charges ranging from an attack a decade ago on Western tourists to the slaying of a writer, a judicial source and the government spokesman Mohammad al Momani said on Saturday.

Al Momani said those executed included one man who was convicted

of an attack last year on an intelligence compound that killed five security personnel.

Another five were involved in an assault by security forces on a militant hideout in Irbid city in the same year that led to the death of seven militants and one police officer, while the rest related to separate incidents that go back as far as 2003.

A judicial source said the authorities also executed a gunman who last year shot dead outside a court a Christian writer who was standing trial for contempt of religion after sharing on social media a caricature insulting Islam.

Also among the 10 was a gunman convicted of firing at a group of Western tourists near the Roman

amphitheater in downtown Amman in 2006, killing one Briton and injuring five other people, the judicial source added.

The five other executions were for rape and sexual assault.

Jordan restored the death sentence by hanging in 2014 after a moratorium on capital punishment between 2006 and 2014.

### S-300 ...

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In a 2015 interview, Zionist air force commander Maj. Gen. Amir Eshel claimed the S-300 was a “significant but not insurmountable challenge” for his force.

With a range of up to 200 kilometers (125 miles) the S-300 is capable of simultaneously tracking and striking multiple targets.

The Islamic Republic maintains that its military power poses no threat to other countries and that its military doctrine is based on deterrence only.

### French ...

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“There is a serious concern among huge western banks because they don't want to take the risk,” Asharq al-Awsat quoted an unnamed German banker as saying.

Senior Iranian officials have repeatedly complained that the U.S. is not adhering to its end of the bargain in the nuclear agreement. The Europeans agree but they mostly play a double game, refusing to commit to serious trade with the Islamic Republic.

### Pro-Palestine ...

(Continued From Page One)

A spokesman also added: “Had the Friends of Palestine Society proposed alternative venues we would have considered them.”

At UCLan, Anum Riaz, the president of its Friends of Palestine Society, told Middle East Eye that the “university was not being transparent” and said officials had not explained why the event had been cancelled.

According to Riaz, university officials cited different reasons ranging from the society not following UCLan's protocols to the event not having a balanced panel.

Riaz also told MEE that a university official had said that the event had contravened the government's new definition of anti-Semitism, which critics say equates criticism of Israel to anti-Semitism.

UCLan said it was committed to creating a diverse campus and that the proposed talk was cancelled because it was not referred to the “designated event process in a timely manner and therefore could not go ahead.”

But in previous statements made about the event, the university said it had banned the talk because it contravened the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) new definition of what constitutes anti-Semitism.

Risk Assessments

Other methods used to curtail Palestine activists on campus according to activists include increased checks when attempting to bring in external speakers and booking rooms for events.

Millie Harris, a politics student at King's College London, told MEE that her Palestine society's events had been subject to increased vetting by the university.

“Two days before our events we've had to go through ‘high-risk assessments’ despite booking the events month in advance,” said Harris.

“This adds extra pressure and stress on students involved in the society who are volunteers because we don't know if the event will be allowed to take place.”

Harris also told MEE that their events were subject to repeated room changes, which costs the society money as they have had to reprint promotional material for their events.

Israeli Apartheid Week is held every year on campuses across the world and aims to draw parallels between the Zionist occupation of the West Bank and apartheid-era South Africa.

The Palestine movement has gained traction across UK campuses with student unions passing motions urging universities to divest from companies complicit in the illegal Israeli occupation of the West Bank.

### France ...

(Continued From Page 2)

Among major oil firms, France's Total has pledged about \$5 billion of investment in Iran's oil sector, but the company awaits U.S. green light to implement it, Amir Hussein Zamaninia said on Saturday.

Iran's government “understands” Total's caution over investing in the Islamic Republic before Washington clarifies its position on trade with Tehran, he added.

“Total has announced that it is awaiting America's final decision with regards to Iran. We understand Total,” Zamaninia said.

“They want to invest five billion dollars. We are not upset with Total,” he said. “Since a month and a half ago... they have spent more than \$20 million” on preparing projects in the Islamic Republic.