

**U.S. Serviceman Killed in Blast Outside Iraq's Mosul**  
 BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – A U.S. soldier has been killed in an explosion outside the Iraqi city of Mosul, says U.S. Department of Defense, the Pentagon. According to a statement released by the Pentagon, the unnamed serviceman died after being injured in an “explosive device blast.” The soldier’s death marks the second U.S. military fatality since operations began to liberate the Iraqi city of Mosul from Daesh terrorists some six months ago. In October, Navy chief petty officer, Jason C. Finan, was killed in a roadside bomb blast north of the city.

*Thought for Today*  
 Generosity is to help a deserving person without his request, and if you help him after his request, then it is either out of self-respect or to avoid rebuke.  
 Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

## Mass Hunger Strike by Palestinian Prisoners Enters 2nd Week



People gather in support of hunger striking Palestinian prisoners on April 29, 2017 in the West Bank city of Bethlehem.

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – An open-ended mass hunger strike by Palestinians to draw the world’s attention to harsh conditions at the Zionist regime’s prisons has entered its second week, with some of those refusing food experiencing health decline. The media committee of the hunger strike, dubbed the Freedom and Dignity Strike, said that several of the hunger-striking inmates had lost 10 kilograms of their weight, the Palestinian Ma’an news agency reported on Sunday. A number of the hunger strikers held

in the Zionist regime’s Ofer prison are suffering from low blood pressure, severe headaches as well as stomach and joint problems, the report added. It further noted that the regime’s authorities do not allow the Palestinian prisoners to drink cool water and instead force them to drink warm water. On Sunday, Palestinian churches were expected to ring bells in solidarity with the hunger strikers. Palestinians have taken part in sit-in protests in the occupied West Bank in a show of solidarity with prisoners on an

open-ended hunger strike in the Zionist regime’s jails. People gathered in the West Bank city of Bethlehem to show their support for some 1,500 incarcerated Palestinians, who have been on hunger strike for 13 days. Tents were also erected throughout the occupied Palestinian territories for people to show their support for hunger striking prisoners. During the Bethlehem protest, the head of the Palestinian Committee of Prisoners’ Affairs, Issa Qaraq, stressed

that solidarity activities would continue for the prisoners, who have entered a dangerous stage in their hunger strike. Elsewhere, Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah visited a protest tent in the West Bank city of al-Khalil where he called on world powers to pressure the Tel Aviv regime into responding positively to the hunger strikers’ demands. “The United Nations should not remain silent about Israeli violations against prisoners and Palestinian people,” he said. Meanwhile, some 100 more Palestinian prisoners being held in the occupying regime’s Megiddo prison have joined the hunger strike. A lawyer for the Palestinian Committee for Prisoners’ Affairs, Loay Akkeh, said that Israel Prison Service was continuing its crackdown on the hunger striking prisoners. He noted that punitive measures were being enforced to “break the will” of the prisoners and make them halt their strike. On Friday, dozens of people were injured when clashes broke out between Palestinians demonstrating in solidarity with the prisoners and Zionist troops across the occupied West Bank. Since April 17, over 1,500 Palestinian prisoners have gone on a mass hunger strike in protest at the conditions of the regime’s prisons initially called for by former Fatah leader, Marwan Barghouti. Palestinian inmates regularly stage hunger strikes in protest at the regime’s administrative detention policy and their harsh prison conditions.

## U.S. Drone Strike Kills Five in Yemen



Yemeni supporters of the Houthi Ansarullah movement attend rally to mark two years of the military invasion by Saudi Arabia, in the capital Sana'a on March 26, 2017.

SANAA (Dispatches) – At least five people have been killed in a U.S. drone raid in Yemen’s central Marib province, east of the capital, Sana’a. Local sources said on Sunday that the early morning strike targeted a car in the area. The vehicle belonged to a known local leader of Yemen’s al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). Some media reports said al-Qaeda militants had been transporting arms from Yakla in Baida province. The latest strike comes 24 hours after a similar raid killed three suspected AQAP operatives in the southern province of Shabwa. On March 2, Washington launched a series of strikes against alleged al-Qaeda targets in Yemen. The attacks focused on the southern provinces of Abyan and Shabwah as well as Bayda, farther to the north. The strikes were the first since a botched ground raid in January that killed women and children as well as an American commando. Yakla was the target of the controversial January 29 air raid ordered by U.S. President Donald Trump. The Pentagon has confirmed more than 70 strikes against alleged militant targets in Yemen since February 28. The aerial attacks, initiated by former U.S. President George W. Bush in 2004, were escalated under former President Barack Obama. The drone strikes were mainly carried out in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia, and Libya.

its impoverished neighbor for more than two years now. On Saturday, the Yemeni army and their allies killed five Saudi mercenaries in Midi District of the northwestern Hajjah Province, Yemen’s al-Masirah television network said. A day earlier, the army and Houthi fighters downed a spy drone belonging to the mercenaries in the same region. Also on Saturday, Yemeni snipers took out four Saudi-backed militants in Sirwah District of the west-central Ma’rib Province. Al-Masirah further reported heavy confrontation between the Army and militants in Jawf Province, which is similarly located in the northwest. The soldiers and Houthi fighters fired rockets at the al-Salatah military base in Saudi Arabia’s southwestern Najran region while Saudi warplanes staged three airstrikes against the strategic al-Dailami airbase, north of the capital Sana’a. Various reports said a U.S. drone had hit al-Jubah District in Ma’rib, allegedly killing four al-Qaeda elements on Friday. The militants were purportedly targeted while leaving the Ma’rib for the nearby province of Bayda. Successive U.S. administrations have been ordering unauthorized drone attacks against Yemen and other Muslim countries. Soon after incumbent President Donald Trump’s inauguration in January, the Pentagon ordered an air raid against Bayda. The strike came to be known as “the botched raid” after it killed as many as 25 civilians and a U.S. commando. The Pentagon, however, continued to order 20 more attacks using manned and unmanned aircraft against purported al-Qaeda targets in Bayda and two more south-central provinces of Abyan and Shabwah in March.

## Report: Daesh Plot to Copy Syria Gas Attack Foiled in Iraq

BAGHDAD (Press TV) – A plot by the Daesh terrorist group to copy in Iraq an alleged chemical strike in northeastern Syria in April and pin it on Iraqi security forces has been nipped in the bud. Iraq’s al-Sumariah news network reported the development on Saturday, citing an unnamed security source. The source said the terrorists had been arrested in the east of the northern Iraq city of Mosul in possession of toxic materials used in manufacturing chemical weapons and explosives. They confessed to have received orders from their higher-ups to carry out gas attacks against the civilians fleeing them, the source said, adding the incidents were supposed to be caught on camera in such a way that would portray Iraqi forces as the perpetrators. The terrorists said the entire scenario had been planned to mirror an alleged gas attack in the northeastern Syria Idlib Province that claimed dozens of civilians

on April 4, he noted. Blaming Damascus for the attack, the United States later carried out a missile strike against the southeastern part of the western Syria city of Homs, causing some 15 fatalities, including civilians. The missile barrage came either before a fact-finding investigation into the circumstances surrounding the alleged gas attack, or a United Nations Security Council mandate. Russia, a Syria ally, laid into the United States for the attack, saying it had seriously damaged Russo-American ties. It rescinded a bilateral pact aimed at preventing the Russian and American aircraft from clashing over Syria, and also vowed to boost the Arab country’s defenses. Daesh has in the past used chlorine gas and other toxic agents against Iraqi security forces and civilians in Mosul. The group, which has called Mosul its so-called headquarters in the city, has



An Iraqi Army soldier fires his machinegun at Daesh positions in the northern city of Mosul’s al-Sahiroun neighbourhood on January 12, 2017.

already lost half of it to Iraqi forces and is increasingly losing grip over the rest. Terrorists have also been documented, time and again, deploying the agents against the Syrian people and military. The West and its associated media outlets

keep incriminating the Syrian government and military in alleged application and possession of such weaponry, while Damascus has fully handed over its chemical arms stockpiles in a UN-monitored process.

## Pentagon: Friendly Fire May Have Killed U.S. Troops in Afghanistan

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – Two U.S. special operations forces soldiers killed in eastern Afghanistan on Wednesday may have been struck by friendly fire in an operation targeting terrorists in Afghanistan, the Pentagon said. Pentagon spokesman Captain Jeff Davis told reporters that the military was investigating whether the two

troops may have been killed by ground fire, either by American forces or Afghan commandos taking part in the raid, though it appeared to be accidental. “We are investigating the circumstances of the combat deaths of the two Army Rangers in the beginning of what was an intense three-hour firefight,” Davis said. “It is

possible these Rangers were struck by friendly fire.” Earlier in the day, the Pentagon identified the soldiers as Sergeant Joshua Rodgers, 22, and Sergeant Cameron Thomas, 23. A third soldier was wounded in the operation. In a statement, U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said the United States owed the slain troops an

“irredeemable debt.” Davis said the target of the raid was Abdul Hasib, the head of the terrorist group in Afghanistan. The U.S. military suspected he was killed in the operation, but could not yet confirm it. The operation, near the border with Pakistan, started at about 10:30 p.m. local time on Wednesday and within minutes the 50 U.S. Army Rangers

along with 40 Afghan commandos came under fire from multiple direction. “It was during these initial moments of the raid that the two Rangers were mortally wounded,” Davis said. Fighting carried on for the next three hours, with Daesh terrorists firing from a heavily fortified compound and tunnel system.

The operation involved drones and aircraft like the AC-130 gunship, Apache helicopter and F-16 fighter jets. About 35 Daesh terrorists are believed to have been killed, Davis said. U.S. and Afghan forces were extracted from the area at about 3 a.m. Thursday.