

Cholera Death Toll Rises in Yemen

SANAA (Dispatches) – The United Nations children's agency (UNICEF) says some 209 people have been killed in recent weeks in a cholera epidemic that threatens the lives of many people in Yemen, which has been under Saudi airstrikes for more than two years. The UN agency said the rise in cholera-related deaths was "alarming." The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said on Monday that the cholera outbreak had claimed the lives of 184 people since April 27, with 11,000 suspected cases across the country.

When someone is sure of the returns, then he shows generosity.

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Russia, Syria Blast U.S. Strikes Targeting Anti-Daesh Forces



Syrian government forces secure a road for a military convoy in the desert area near the border with Jordan and Iraq, May 10, 2017.

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – Russia and Syria have condemned U.S. airstrikes targeting anti-Daesh forces, saying the "brazen" attacks violate the Arab country's sovereignty and show Washington's claims of fighting terrorism are false.

The U.S. military launched the attack against a convoy of the Syrian military heading towards the border near Jordan where Daesh terrorists are based.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Gennady Gatilov on Friday described the attacks as "unacceptable," which also claimed the lives of civilians.

Speaking in Geneva, Gatilov said the strikes violated Syria's sovereignty and would not help efforts to

achieve a political solution to the ongoing crisis in the country.

A Syrian government's military source said the U.S. strike hit "one of our military points" late Thursday, killing several people and causing material damage.

The source said the attack hampered efforts by the Syrian army and its allies to fight Daesh terrorists who have been wreaking havoc in Iraq and Syria for years.

"This brazen attack by the so-called international coalition exposes the falseness of its claims about fighting terrorism," the source said.

"The Syrian Arab Army is fighting terrorism on its territory, and no party has the right to determine the course

of its operations," the Syrian military source added.

Syrian state media provided no precise figures about the number of casualties, but the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said eight people were killed in the attack.

This is while, U.S. Defense Secretary James Mattis has claimed the United States is not deepening its role in war in Syria, where government forces have been battling foreign-sponsored terrorists for more than six years.

"We are not increasing our role in the Syrian civil war, but we will defend our troops," Mattis said on Thursday, shortly after the attack.

"We will defend ourselves (if) peo-

ple take aggressive steps against us. And that's been a going-in policy of ours for a long time," he stated.

The attack came after Syria's warring parties agreed to set up expert committees to discuss "constitutional issues" as part of efforts to facilitate a political resolution of the deadly conflict in the Arab country.

UN mediator Staffan de Mistura's office made the announcement on Thursday.

De Mistura held a series of separate meetings with representatives from the Damascus government and opposition groups to discuss "legal and constitutional issues of relevance to the intra-Syrian talks".

The sixth round of Syrian talks began under the auspices of the United Nations in the Swiss city of Geneva on Tuesday.

De Mistura has presented Syria's main opposition bloc, the Syrian High Negotiations Committee (HNC), with a document proposing a team of civil society activists and technocrats tasked with mapping a way forward to a draft law.

A new constitution for Syria is one of the four separate topics or "baskets" on the agenda at the ongoing talks, alongside governance, elections and combating "terrorism".

Speaking to journalists shortly after the UN's announcement, government delegation head Bashar al-Jaafari however said his team had "not discussed any baskets yet".

The Syrian diplomat described the UN's earlier plan as "too ambitious". Jaafari also played down that the expert meetings would push the constitutional process forward.

"The work of these experts will have nothing to do with the constitution... They will not take decisions."

Saudi Arabia Seeks to Become Major Global Arms Supplier



Saudi tanks and the supporters of the former Yemeni regime approach the key al-Anad military base in southwestern Lahij Province, Yemen, on August 3, 2015.

RIYADH (Dispatches) – Saudi Arabia says it is set to create a new military industries firm as part of its plan to become a major global arms supplier and gradually wean itself off oil revenues.

The state-owned Saudi Arabian Military Industries (SAMI) "aims to become one of the world's top 25 defense companies by 2030," a statement from the Saudi Public Investment Fund (PIF) said.

The announcement came two days ahead of the planned trip of US President Donald Trump to the kingdom.

According to the PIF, SAMI will be both a manufacturer and service provider and it will be involved in maintenance and repair of fixed-wing aircraft and production of drones, military vehicle, missiles, radars and other electronic military equipment.

The firm is set to contribute nearly \$3.7 billion to Saudi Arabia's gross

domestic production and invest more than \$1.6 billion in research and development by 2030, creating over 40,000 jobs, the PIF noted.

According to an April report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Saudi Arabia spent \$63.7 billion in its military sector in 2016, making it the world's fourth largest military spender.

Riyadh says it currently produces only two percent of its security and military needs domestically, but it plans to reach the target of 50 percent by 2030.

"SAMI will establish companies through joint ventures with global original equipment manufacturers, as well as cooperating with local military companies," the PIF said.

Saudi Arabia, which is widely considered a key sponsor of extremist terrorist groups across the world, is now leading a deadly war on Yemen which has claimed the lives of over 12,000 so far.

Former Zionist Spy Chiefs Attack Trump for 'Intel Leak'

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – Two former directors of the Zionist regime's Mossad spy agency have attacked U.S. President Donald Trump for his alleged sharing of highly classified, Israeli-obtained "intelligence" with Russia.

President Trump was surrounded by controversy over the weekend, when The Washington Post alleged that he had divulged secret information with Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Ambassador to the U.S. Sergei Kislyak during a recent meeting at the White House. While the Post did not reveal the origin of that information, it said the provider had not given "permission" to the U.S. to share the info with Russia.

The New York Times, citing unnamed sources, later claimed that the intelligence had come from the occupied territories and was about the bomb-making capabilities of the Daesh terrorist group.

Danny Yatom, who led the regime's spy organization from 1996 to 1998, said on Wednesday that Tel Aviv had to "punish the Americans" over the leakage.

He said the disclosure would be a "catastrophe" if it turned out that the U.S. president also compromised the Israeli "sources" in the Syrian city of Raqqa, Daesh's so-called headquarters in Syria, during the White House meeting with the Russians.

"If we will assess that our sources

of intelligence are in danger due to the way it will be handled by the United States, then we will have to keep the very sensitive information close to our chests," he further said.

He said the Zionist regime had to refrain from "transferring information" to Trump or just provide him with "partial" intelligence lest he would "endanger" Mossad's sources.

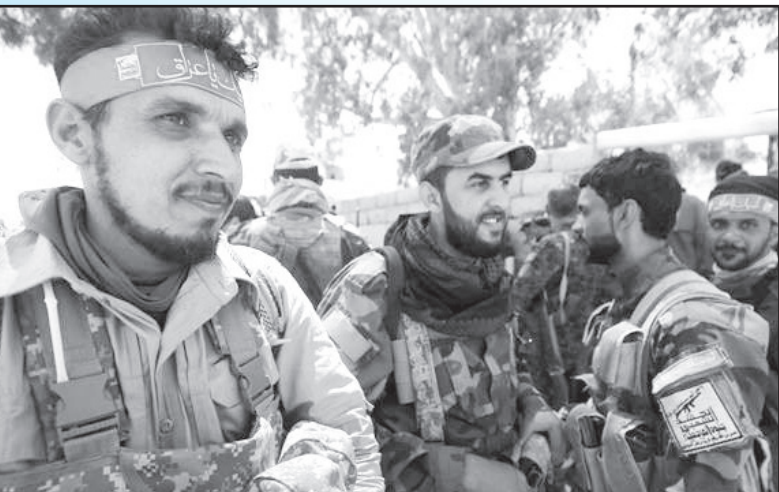
It was not clear why the alleged sharing of the information with Russia, which has been actively fighting Daesh and other terrorist groups in Syria, would "endanger" the Israeli "sources." But speculation has been raised that, in light of previous indications of quiet cooperation between Israel and Daesh, the Tel Aviv regime is now fearing a further revelation of its dealings with the internationally-designated terrorist group.

The unusually angry remarks by Yatom and similar comments by his predecessor, Shabtai Shavit, have only strengthened such speculation.

Shavit, who was the regime's spy chief from 1986 to 1996, for his part, lambasted Trump and referred to him as a "bull in a china shop," who he said could not run even a "corner shop."

"Before he (Trump) makes any decision, he posts on Twitter. He tweets and then checks the responses in order to make his decision. Is that how you run a country?" Shavit said.

Iraqi Popular Forces Recapture 2 Airbases From Daesh



Members of the Iraqi pro-government Popular Mobilization Units (Hashd al-Sha'abi) gather in a street in the modern town of Hatra, southwest of the northern city of Mosul, on April 28, 2017.

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – Iraqi fighters from the Popular Mobilization Units have established complete control over two airbases on the western outskirts of Mosul.

Sami Masoudi, a commander of the pro-government forces -- commonly known in Arabic as Hashd al-Sha'abi -- said in a statement on Thursday that his fellow fighters had liberated Washington military airport west of Mosul, Arabic-language al-Sumaria satellite television network reported.

Masoudi said the recapture of the airbase was strategically important as the site would play a major role in supplying weapons and military equipment to Iraqi army soldiers.

He further noted that Hashd al-Sha'abi fighters had retaken six villages, including Khalaf Idris, al-Khamisah, al-Madinah and Ayn Fathi, west of Mosul.

The developments came shortly after Hashd al-Sha'abi fighters re-claimed control over Sahl Sinjar airbase south of al-Qairawan dis-

trict.

Separately, Commander of Federal Police Forces Lieutenant General Raed Shaker Jawdat said security personnel have retaken 291 square kilometers of land in the western flank of Mosul.

The United Nations also said that another 200,000 people might flee their homes as fighting escalates in Mosul.

UN humanitarian coordinator Lise Grande said nearly 700,000 people have already been displaced from Mosul ever since Iraqi army troops and their allies launched a major operation on October 17, 2016 to retake the city from Daesh terrorists.

"The numbers of people fleeing their homes in western Mosul are overwhelming. They are fleeing under very difficult circumstances. Many are food insecure and haven't had access to safe drinking water and medicines for weeks or months," Grande said in a statement.

She noted that Iraqi government and humanitarian aid agencies are rushing in supplies, but because of the large number of displaced "it's becoming more and more difficult to ensure civilians receive the as-

sistance and protection they need."

Meanwhile, at least nine people have been killed in a bomb explosion that ripped through a popular market in the town of Tuz Khurmatu, situated 25 kilometers south of the oil-rich city of Kirkuk.

A security source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the deadly incident took place when a bomber detonated his explosive-laden belt amongst the crowd. Eleven people sustained injuries in the attack.

There were no immediate claims of responsibility for the act of violence. However, Iraqi authorities usually blame such attacks on the Daesh group Takfiri.

The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) says a total of 317 Iraqi civilians were killed and another 403 injured in acts of terrorism, violence and armed conflict in April.

According to the UN mission, the worst-affected area was the northern province of Nineveh, where violence took the lives of 153 civilians and left 123 others wounded. Fifty-five people also lost their lives in the capital province of Baghdad, and 179 others sustained injuries there.