

Scores Killed, Wounded in Afghan Bank Attack

KABUL (Dispatches) – **Gunmen have stormed a bank in southeastern Afghanistan, killing three people and wounding over 30 more, officials say, as the country struggles with a rise in violent attacks.**

Five attackers, armed with suicide vests and guns, forced their way inside after one of them blew themselves up at the entrance of New Kabul Bank in Gardez, the capital of Paktia province, Abdullah Hasrat, the provincial spokesman, told AFP.

“People were queuing to receive their monthly salaries from the bank when they were attacked,” he said. Abdul Wali, the deputy provincial governor, said most of people in the bank were members of the security forces.

“After around two hours of stand-off, all the attackers were killed. Unfortunately, two police and a civilian also lost their lives,” he said, adding that 31 other people were wounded.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, but militants such as Taliban and Daesh

have previously carried out similar attacks, including on banks where Afghan security forces regularly collect their pay.

In 2014, an attack on Kabul Bank killed at least ten people, including five police, in Lashkar Gah, the capital of volatile Helmand province in southern Afghanistan.

The attack came after a suspected roadside bomb explosion in Afghanistan has killed as many as 11 family members headed to a wedding as other attacks have left ten policemen dead.

Five women, five children and a man in a vehicle were killed in Logar province.

“All were members of one family,” Mohammad Halim Fedayee, the provincial governor said, adding, “They were going to attend a wedding ceremony.”

One woman and two men were also wounded in the blast.

Also on Friday, in Kapisa province, five Afghan policemen were killed in fighting with the Taliban militants.

The Taliban attacked a police



In this April 18, 2015 photo, members of Afghan security forces inspect the site of an attack near a new Kabul Bank in Jalalabad, east of Kabul, Afghanistan.

checkpoint in the early morning hours, according to Qais Qaderi, the spokesman for the provincial governor, who added that the attack was launched in Tagab district.

He said ten of the Taliban militants taking part in the attack were killed by Afghan forces.

Two Taliban commanders were among those killed by Afghan forces.

In Nangarhar province, in a so-called green-on-blue insider attack,

a policeman turned his rifle on his sleeping colleagues at an outpost during the night, killing five of them in the district of Ghanikhil.

After the shooting, the attacker gathered all the victims’ firearms and fled the scene, said the district governor, Abdul Wahab Momand.

Elsewhere in Parwan province, another roadside bomb targeted a U.S. military convoy. The blast disabled an armored vehicle but caused no injuries.

Yemenis Fire Ballistic Missile at Riyadh



A Yemeni school girl stands outside a school damaged in an airstrike in the southern Yemeni city of Ta'izz, March 16, 2017.

SANAA (Dispatches) – **Yemen’s Houthi Ansarullah fighters and their allies in the army have reportedly fired a long-range ballistic missile at the Saudi capital Riyadh, a few hours ahead of U.S. President Donald Trump’s visit to the kingdom.**

The Yemeni forces, backed by allied fighters from Popular Committees, launched a Borkan-2 (Vol-

cano-2) ballistic missile, a domestically modified rocket, aimed at the Saudi capital on Friday evening, according to a report by Yemen’s Arabic-language al-Masirah television network.

The missile strike conveyed “a clear and important message that we are all ready to respond to the aggression,” a statement by the Ye-

meni army said.

The report, however, gave no further detail, including the exact impact location, the possible casualty toll and the extent of potential damage inflicted.

Meanwhile, the Saudi military announced that it had intercepted and destroyed a projectile some 200 kilometers west of Riyadh, without giving more details.

Back in March 18, the Yemeni army announced that another Borkan-2 missile accurately hit King Salman Air Base, located in the vicinity of Riyadh, in retaliation for the deadly Saudi war on Yemen.

On September 2, 2016, Yemeni forces also fired a similar missile against a stationary target in the Saudi city of Ta’if, located more than 700 kilometers southeast of the Saudi capital.

The Yemeni army says so far more than 100 ballistic missiles of various types have been fired at positions held by Saudi invaders inside

and outside Yemen.

The Friday launch came just hours before Trump’s arrival in Riyadh for a two-day visit to the Arab kingdom, his first foreign trip since he became president.

Yemenis are particularly angry at Washington for being complicit in the Saudi crimes against the Yemeni nation by providing the Al Saud regime with conventional and banned weapons.

Since March 2015, Saudi warplanes have been heavily bombarding Yemen in an attempt to crush the popular Houthi Ansarullah movement and reinstate the resigned president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi.

Latest tallies show that the imposed war has so far killed over 12,000 Yemenis and wounded thousands more. The Saudi aggression has also taken a heavy toll on the country’s facilities and infrastructure, destroying many hospitals, schools, and factories.

Palestinians Clash With Zionist Troops in Gaza Strip, West Bank

GAZA STRIP (Dispatches) – **The Zionist regime’s troops have reportedly shot and wounded several Palestinians, including a woman, in the occupied West Bank and the blockaded Gaza Strip.**

Gaza Health Ministry spokesman Ashraf al-Qidra said dozens of people had converged east of the city of Beit Lahia to express solidarity with hundreds of Palestinians, who have gone on hunger strike in the regime’s jails in protest at the Tel Aviv regime’s administrative detention policy and harsh prison conditions.

A 21-year-old demonstrator sustained grave injuries to his leg after Zionist troops hurled an explosive device at the crowd.

Zionist troops, stationed at watchtowers and tanks positioned in the vicinity of Kissufim military base, also fired shots at Palestinian protesters, leaving one injured, who was taken to Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis to

receive medical treatment.

Four Palestinian civilians were also wounded after Zionist troops fired live bullets at them near the Nahal Oz border crossing. They were transferred to Shifa Hospital in western Gaza City.

Two others were wounded east of Jabalia refugee camp.

Elsewhere in the occupied West Bank city of Bethlehem, Zionist troops disguised as Palestinian protesters kidnapped six young Palestinian men after infiltrating a crowd of protesters.

Zionist troops fired teargas canisters and sound bombs at Palestinian marchers, causing many to suffer from severe teargas inhalation.

At least seven Palestinians were struck with live and rubber-coated steel bullets during clashes in the villages of Nilin and Abud, as well as Qalandiya military checkpoint.

‘Saudi Armored Vehicle Explodes in Shia Town’

RIYADH (Dispatches) – **An armored vehicle belonging to the Saudi military has reportedly exploded in the besieged Shia town of Awamiyah, which has been under attack by regime forces over the past days.**

According to Taqreed al-Ahrar news website, all those on board the military vehicle were killed after it exploded in Awamiyah, located in the Qatif region of Eastern Province.

The exact reason for the explosion is unknown, but reports by other

news outlets indicated that it was caused after two armored vehicles collided and one was engulfed in flames.

Sources have also reported widespread mutiny among Saudi military forces in the besieged town, with a large number of troops refraining from field operations against people.

The incident occurred just a day after the regime forces, equipped with heavy weapons, launched a fresh wave of shelling attacks against Awamiyah,

as a fierce crackdown on protesters there enters its second week.

The Saudi military fired a full array of weapons, including rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), at different residential areas in the flashpoint town.

Saudi regime forces have been attacking Awamiyah since May 10, after putting the town under a siege, in the wake of fierce clashes with local residents protesting the demolition of the historic al-Mosara neighborhood for a planned devel-

opment project.

Pictures and videos of bulldozers, escorted by heavily armored military vehicles and heading toward the site, have gone viral.

Since February 2011, Saudi Arabia has stepped up security measures in the Shia-dominated Eastern Province, which has been rocked by anti-regime demonstrations.

The protesters demand free speech, the release of political prisoners and an end to economic and religious discrimination.

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of both countries, the region and the world”.

Russia, which fights alongside Iran in support of President Assad, was among the first to congratulate Rouhani.

President Vladimir Putin sent a telegram confirming “his readiness to continue active joint work... in line with maintaining stability and security in the Middle East and the world as a whole”, the Kremlin said.

The new president faces a stark challenge from U.S. President Donald Trump, who has threatened to tear up the nuclear deal and reimpose sanctions.

Rouhani made an apparent dig at rival Saudi Arabia, which is currently hosting Trump, saying: “Our people have declared to neighboring countries and the whole region that the path to ensuring security is the reinforcement of democracy and not relying on foreign powers.”

But European and Asian officials have also welcomed Rouhani’s re-election as they pursue lucrative investments in the wake of the nuclear deal, that lifted sanctions in exchange for curbs to Iran’s nuclear program.

EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini tweeted her vow to work for greater “engagement, regional peace... (and the) expectations of people in Iran”.

Although Rouhani brought inflation down from around 40% when he took office in 2013, prices are still rising at nine percent a year.

Oil sales have rebounded since the nuclear deal took effect in January last year, but growth in the rest of the economy has been limited, leaving unemployment at 12.5% overall, and at almost 30% among young people.

Trump... (Continued From Page One)

with a cane, the king greeted Trump on the tarmac. A military brass band played, cannons boomed and seven Saudi jets flew over in V-formation, trailing red, white and blue smoke.

The two leaders sat side by side at the VIP section of the airport terminal and drank cups of Arabic coffee. “Do you spend a lot of time in New York?” Trump was overheard asking the king.

On the drive to the Ritz hotel where Trump is staying, King Salman rode with the president in the heavily armored presidential limousine nicknamed “the Beast”.

Trump was expected to give a speech on Islam and the need to tackle “radical ideology” on Sunday.

National Security Advisor HR McMaster said in a press briefing that Trump “will deliver an inspiring yet direct speech on the need to confront radical ideology” and that he would share his hopes for a “peaceful vision of Islam”. He also presented a detailed itinerary of the “historic” trip.

Shortly after taking office, Trump had sought to block people from several Muslim-majority nations from entering the United States, but the travel ban has been blocked by federal courts.

The 70-year-old president’s travel to Saudi Arabia, Occupied Palestine, Italy and Belgium will be Trump’s longest time away from the White House since he took office four months ago.

Even his hand gestures were likely to draw scrutiny in the Middle East, where the thumbs-up sign, a signature move of Trump’s, is considered taboo.

The uproar over Comey’s firing looked unlikely to go away. “It’s almost always true that when a president goes on a big foreign trip, especially one that has some important summits ... that that dominates the news and knocks most other stuff out,” said Republican strategist Charlie Black.

Trump, who has expressed a desire for friendlier relations with Moscow, drew a storm of criticism this week when it emerged that he had shared sensitive national security information with Russia’s foreign minister during a meeting last week in the White House.

His fellow Republicans in Congress have expressed frustration that Trump’s pro-business economic agenda, featuring a plan to cut corporate and individual taxes, has been pushed to the backburner by the turmoil.