

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime's authorities have agreed to a deal with the Palestinian prisoners who have been on hunger strike in the regime's jails over the past 40 days.

Issa Qaraqe, the head of the Palestinian Committee of Prisoners' Affairs, confirmed the deal on Saturday.

Other informed sources also said that the hunger strikers were now halting their protest action.

'Saudi Arabia After Splitting Muslim People'



Abdul Malik Badreddin al-Houthi, the leader of Yemen's Houthi Ansarullah movement

SANAA (Dispatches) – Saudi Arabia seeks to split the Muslim Ummah – the Muslim people as a whole – and to turn them into indecisive people who can be

exploited, the leader of Yemen's Houthi Ansarullah movement says.

Abdul Malik Badreddin al-Houthi made the remarks in a Saturday message to the Yemeni public, in

which he also felicitated them on the occasion of the start of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, Yemen's al-Ahd news agency reported.

He said Saudi Arabia was the

leading regime among the "regional hypocrites, which only seek destruction and sedition to execute American and Zionist plots."

The recent visit to Saudi Arabia by United States President Donald Trump – during which Washington agreed to sell Riyadh 110 billion dollars worth of arms – was likewise to the benefit of the Zionist regime, Houthi said.

Houthi urged Yemenis to strengthen their faith in order to confront the challenges facing them, especially the plots of the "Saudi-American invaders."

Saudi Arabia has been waging war on Yemen since 2015 to restore a former president who was friendly to Riyadh. The invasion, in which the U.S. also provides assistance to Saudi Arabia, has killed thousands of civilians.

The Houthi leader urged the mercenaries fighting on behalf of Saudi Arabia to mend their ways. He invited them to exchange all the hostages they were holding with the prisoners held by the Houthis during Ramadan.

Bahraini Clerics: Struggle to Defend Religion Just Started

MANAMA (Dispatches) – Bahraini clerics have hailed the endeavors made by anti-government protesters who resist the Al Khalifah regime's heavy crackdown on dissent, saying their struggle to save their religion has just started.

"The battle for the defense of religion is not over, it has just started," the Bahraini clerics said in a statement, adding that Islam and their Persian Gulf island country needed those who would "sacrifice" their lives for this cause.

The statement came three days after the Al Khalifah regime launched a full-scale military raid on the northwestern village of Diraz, situated some 12 kilometers west of the capital Manama, to suppress a growing protest staged in solidarity with the top cleric, Sheikh Isa Qassim, the spiritual leader of Bahrain's Shia majority.

During the raid in Diraz, Qassim's hometown, regime forces killed at least five demonstrators, wounded dozens and arrested over 280 people during the crackdown, which took place shortly after a meeting between U.S. President Donald Trump and Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifah in the Saudi capital Riyadh.

On Sunday, a Bahraini court convicted Sheikh Qassim of illegal collection of funds and money laundering and sentenced him to one year in jail. It also ordered him to pay \$265,266 in fines. The court ruling sparked widespread demonstrations across the country.

Qassim also faces expulsion from the kingdom after authorities revoked his citizenship last year. His defense lawyers refused to attend hearings, which they saw as an attack on the country's Shia Muslims.

The clerics also vowed to "continue the path of the martyrs" who lost their lives during the "brutal" crackdown on Diraz inhabitants, the responsibility of which lays not only on the Al Khalifah regime but also on the U.S. for its "complicity" in the regime's crimes against Shias.

They also stressed that Tuesday's raid would only boost Bahraini people's resolve to resist against the Manama regime's brutality.

Elsewhere in the statement, the clerics noted that the parents of those killed have an inalienable right to receive the body of their loved ones and to hold dignified funerals for them. They also said denying bereaved people their right to do so would amount to a "betrayal of God."

This is while Saudi Arabia, which has been helping the Bahraini military in its crackdown on peaceful protests since 2011, has defended Manama's brutalities in Diraz.

Home to the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet, Bahrain has carried out a crackdown on opposition political activity and dissent since an uprising began in 2011 against the ruling Al Khalifah regime by demonstrators from the Shia Muslim majority.

As Ramadhan Begins

Dozens Killed in Afghanistan Violence

KABUL (Dispatches) – A bomber killed at least 14 people in Afghanistan on Saturday and fighting between militants and security forces left at least 36 people dead on the first day of Islam's holy Month of Ramadhan.

In eastern Khost province, an attacker detonated a car bomb near a soccer field that is close to a military base, officials said.

At a local hospital, doctors received at least 14 dead bodies and eight wounded people, said Gul Mohammaddin Mangal, head of the public health department in Khost.

"The bodies are not recognizable and it is hard to say if they are civilians or security forces," he said.

According to government authorities, the attack happened around 8:30 am local time after a bomber detonated his explosives while driving a vehicle near a military base and a football field.

The bombing came on the first day of Islam's holy month of Ramadhan, in which most Muslims fast from dawn to dusk.

There has been no claim of responsibility for the bombing. But both Taliban and Daesh terrorist groups have been carrying out such attacks in Afghanistan.

In the north-western province of Badghis, militants attacked security forces in Qadis district, sparking

fighting that killed 22 insurgents, six security forces, and eight civilians, said Zahir Bahand a spokesman for the provincial governor.

The fighting also left 33 militants and 17 civilians wounded, he said.

The Western-backed Afghan government is battling both Taliban and Daesh terrorists around the country.

Taliban forces have increased their attacks in the weeks before Ramadhan, with a string of strikes in Kandahar, Paktia, and Helmand, among other provinces.

Meanwhile, at least 59 Daesh terrorists were killed during the operations by Afghan security forces,

which concluded in the Chaparhar district of the eastern Nangarhar Province on Friday. According to local government authorities, at least 39 more militants were also wounded in the course of the operations and three others were taken into custody.

The operations were launched in Chaparhar district on May 16 and led to the flushing out of the Daesh terrorists from all villages in the district.

Afghanistan has seen militancy by the Taliban since 2001, when a U.S.-led invasion ousted a Taliban regime. The terrorist group of Daesh has also gained a foothold in the country more recently.

Iraq Begins Operation to Liberate Last Daesh-Held Mosul Region

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – Iraqi forces have launched an offensive to retake the last enclave controlled by Daesh in the northern city of Mosul as the terrorist group is getting final blows in the Arab country.

The Iraqi military announced the beginning of the operation in a statement released on Saturday one day after the air force dropped leaflets urging residents in Mosul's Old City center to flee through safe corridors.

The targeted Mosul enclave covers mainly the Old City center and three adjacent districts alongside the western bank of the Tigris River.

On Friday, Stephen O'Brien, United Nations under-secretary-general for humanitarian affairs, estimated that as many as 200,000 Iraqis may flee Mosul in the coming days.

Reports say almost 760,000 people have already escaped the embattled Iraqi city over the past months.

The Iraqi air force dropped leaflets on Friday urging residents in the Daesh-held Old City center of Mosul to flee.

The leaflet drop, announced in an Iraqi military statement, signaled that the decisive offensive to dislodge the terrorists from their remaining enclave in the northern Iraqi city was imminent.

The offensive on Mosul is now in its eighth month.

Civilians trapped behind Daesh lines face a harrowing situation with little food and water, no electricity and limited access to hospitals.

"Iraqi air force planes dropped hundreds of thousands of leaflets a short while ago on the non-liberated areas ... urging citizens



Iraqi forces walk on the roof of a house on the frontline in Mosul's Old City, May 24, 2017.

to exit through safe corridors," an Iraqi military statement said.

A resident in Farouq, an Old City neighborhood, sounded desperate in a telephone interview. "We're waiting for death at any moment, either by bombing or starving," he said, asking not to be identified for his safety. "Adults eat one meal a

day, either flour or lentil soup."

Civilians trapped in Mosul suffer from a dire lack of food, water and fuel while they have limited access to hospitals.

Mosul fell to Daesh in 2014, when the terror outfit began its campaign of death and destruction in Iraq.

Turkey Arrests Opposition Daily Staff Over Alleged Links to Gulen

ANKARA (Dispatches) – Turkey has arrested two employees of the opposition newspaper Sozcu over their alleged links to U.S.-based Turkish figure Fethullah Gulen, whom Ankara blames for masterminding a failed military coup last year.

Turkish media said Mediha Olgun, Sozcu's internet editor, and Gokmen Ulu, its correspondent for Izmir Province, were arrested late on Friday.

The media said that the pair faced charges including "knowingly aiding and abetting the Fethullah Terrorist Organization (FETO), without being part of its hierarchical structure," and "aiding the assassination attempt of the president."

Sozcu's financial director, Yonca Yucekaleli, who had turned herself in earlier, was released on Friday.

Arrest warrants had been issued for Ulu, Olgun, and Yucekaleli along with Sozcu's owner last week. They had all been accused of committing crimes on behalf of Gulen's movement.

Turkey has sacked more than 4,000 judges and prosecutors accused of supporting last year's abortive putsch against President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The judiciary officials were

dismissed from duty after investigation, Turkish Justice Minister Bekir Bozdog said on Friday.

Ankara accuses Gulen, who wields huge support in the judiciary, of having a role in the failed coup.

"Over 4,000 judges and prosecutors have been removed from their posts inside the Turkish judiciary over their links to the Fethullah Terrorist Organization (FETO)," Bozdog said, referring to the name Turkey gives the Gulen movement.

"The investigations have finished. At this moment, there is no judge or prosecutor left that we have not screened," Bozdog said in a speech in Ankara.

He added that there could be further investigations "because of the nature of the organization."

"We are facing a very different kind of terror organization," the Turkish minister said.

Also on Friday, a parliamentary probe blamed FETO for the July 15, 2016 coup attempt that left 250 people dead and about 2,200 injured.

Resat Petek, who chaired the parliamentary probe, said a draft report "clearly reveals" FETO was behind the coup bid.