

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime has launched a rocket to test a new propulsion system, with military officials refusing to say whether it was successful or not.

In a brief statement on Monday, the military said the test was "arranged in advance by the security services and was carried out as planned."

Eyewitnesses said it took place at the Palmachim airbase as the rocket left a trail visible for kilometers.

UN Warns Daesh Directly Targeting Civilians in Iraq's Mosul



Popular Mobilization Units fire towards Daesh terrorists during a battle on the outskirts of Al-Ba'aj, west of Mosul in Iraq on May 26, 2017.

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – The United Nations has warned that Daesh terrorists are directly targeting civilians trying to flee from Iraq's west Mosul.

The UN's humanitarian relief coordinator, Lise Grande, stressed that the terrorists were killing families as Iraqi forces entered the final stages of their operations to liberate the city. "We know that Daesh is directly targeting families as they try to escape, we know that there are very limited

stocks of food and medicines, we know that there are severe shortages of water and electricity," she said.

"Civilians are going to be at the most extreme risk they have been during the entire campaign...All of the evidence points to the fact that the civilians who are trapped in these neighborhoods and districts are in grave danger," she added.

Meanwhile, at least 20 Iraqi civilians were killed in airstrikes conducted by

the so-called U.S.-led coalition in the northern parts of Mosul's Old City.

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of civilians in parts of Mosul held by Daesh are struggling to get food, water and medicine, the United Nations said, days into a new push by Iraqi government troops to take the northern city.

Grande spoke a day after Iraq's army said it had launched a new offensive to take the militant zones

on the western side of the Tigris river.

Progress has been slow, an Iraqi government adviser told Reuters, also late on Sunday. "The fighting is extremely intense ... the presence of civilians means we have to be very cautious," he said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

People who had managed to get out of the terrorist areas "report a dramatic situation including lack of food, limited water and severe shortages of medicines," Grande said by phone.

"We know that there have been health facilities in these areas, but we don't know whether they are still functioning."

Government forces have been dropping leaflets over the districts telling families to flee - but many have remained fearing getting caught in the cross-fire.

"We have been informed by authorities that the evacuation is not compulsory ... If civilians decide to stay ... they will be protected by Iraqi security forces," said Grande.

"People who choose to flee will be directed to safe routes. The location of these will change depending on which areas are under attack and dynamics on the battlefield," she added.

The latest Iraqi government push is part of a broader offensive in Mosul, now in its eighth month.

Mass Grave Unearthed In Northern Syria



A Syrian youth walks past a destroyed vehicle in the town of Tabqa, about 55 kilometers west of Raqqah city, on May 18, 2017.

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – Another mass grave has been discovered in Syria, shedding more light on the horrific crimes committed by the terrorist group Daesh.

U.S.-backed Kurdish fighters have found the grave containing the bodies of hundreds of people executed by Daesh members in northern Syria.

The so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) made the gruesome discovery near the town of Tabqa on Sunday, the Kurdish-language Forat news agency reported.

According to the report, the grave lies in a desert area, about 4 kilometers east of Tabqa, which was captured by the Kurdish forces earlier this month.

Tabqa sits along the Euphrates River on a strategic supply route about 55 kilometers west of Raqqah, Daesh's stronghold in Syria.

The news agency added that the grave

contained the bodies of the Syrian soldiers and civil servants who were executed after the terror group seized the town in August 2014.

Based on eyewitness accounts, Daesh executed hundreds of Syrian soldiers who defended an air base, the last stronghold of government forces, in the area. Most of the victims were decapitated.

Syrian forces have already found numerous mass graves in areas overrun by the terrorists. The bodies in most cases showed signs of torture and mutilation.

An assessment published by the Associated Press last year suggested that up to 15,000 victims of genocide and mass slaughter may be buried across territory formerly held by Daesh.

Syria has been gripped by foreign-sponsored terrorism since March 2011. The bloody conflict has already claimed hundreds of thousands of lives.

New Clashes as Fate of Bahrain Cleric Remains Unknown

MANAMA (Dispatches) – Bahraini regime forces have clashed with demonstrators rallying in solidarity with a prominent Shia cleric and his slain supporters in several areas across the kingdom.

Troops attacked peaceful protesters who took to the streets of Sitra Island and chanted slogans against King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifah.

The protesters held the monarch responsible for recent crimes committed by his forces in the northwestern village of Diraz where several protesters were killed during a raid of Sheikh Isa Qassim's home.

On May 23, police raided Diraz, which has been under a military siege for almost a year, and stormed the home of the spiritual leader of Bahrain's Shia majority.

At least five demonstrators were killed

and dozens more injured during the crackdown which also saw more than 280 people arrested.

The fresh wave of anti-regime protests broke out on May 21, when a Bahraini court sentenced Sheikh Qassim to one year in jail and ordered him to pay \$265,266 in fines.

Last year, the cleric was also stripped of his citizenship, which sparked repeated sit-ins outside his residence in Diraz.

Demonstrators also staged a protest in support of Sheikh Qassem in Saar residential area, west of Manama, calling for the punishment of those behind the killing of activists.

Al Khalifah regime forces rushed to attack the peaceful protesters, firing toxic gases to disperse them.

Similar protests were also held in Bilad Al Qadeem town and the villages of Shahrkan, Samaheej, Bani Jamra,

Musalla, Karranah, Karzakan, Karabad, Daih and Sanabis late on Sunday.

The developments come as the fate of Sheikh Qassem remains unknown amid reports that the regime wanted to send him to exile either in Turkey or the United Arab Emirates after Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi rejected such a request in a show of support for the Shia leader.

Bahrainis also held a symbolic funeral for the slain activists in the villages of Abu Saiba and Shakhora, calling for those responsible for the crimes to be held accountable.

The five victims were buried on Friday without their families' permission in a move denounced by the victim's relatives as a crime.

"The martyrs' families announce that depriving them from burying their sons in accordance with their wish can be construed as a crime which will be added

to the first crime of liquidating them in the field," the families said in a statement.

Thousands of anti-regime protesters have held numerous demonstrations in Bahrain on an almost daily basis ever since a popular uprising began in the kingdom in early February 2011. They are demanding that the Al Khalifah dynasty relinquish power and a just system representing all Bahrainis be established.

The Manama regime has spared no effort to clamp down on dissent and rights activists. On March 14, 2011, troops from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were deployed to Bahrain to assist Manama in its crackdown.

Scores of people have been killed and hundreds of others have been injured or arrested as a result of the Al Khalifah regime's crackdown on anti-regime activists.

Family of Saudi Wahhabism Founder Disowns Qatar Emir

RIYADH (Dispatches) – Descendants of the founder of Saudi Arabia's Wahhabi ideology have disowned Qatar's ruling family amid heightened tension between the two Persian Gulf neighbors.

According to Saudi Arabia's Okaz newspaper, 200 descendants of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab have denied in a statement claims that the 18th-century cleric was the Qatari emir's great grandfather.

The statement has not mentioned the Qatari emir by name but has referred to his construction of a

mosque named after Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, demanding that Qatar rename the mosque.

Qatar's state mosque, opened in 2011, is known as the Sheikh Mohammed ibn Abd al-Wahhab mosque.

"We, therefore, demand that the name of the mosque be changed for it does not carry its true Salafi path," the statement added.

Wahhabism is the radical ideology dominating Saudi Arabia, freely preached by government-backed clerics there, and inspiring

terrorists worldwide. Daesh and other terror groups use the ideology to declare people of other faiths as "infidels" and then kill them.

The development comes in the wake of escalating tensions between Riyadh and Doha since Qatar's state-run news agency released comments attributed to Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani on sensitive issues last week.

The Qatari emir was quoted as describing Iran as an "Islamic power" and "big power in the

stabilization of the region."

He was also cited as questioning U.S. President Donald Trump's hostility towards Tehran, speaking of "tensions" between Doha and Washington, praising Hamas resistance movement as "the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people," and threatening to withdraw ambassadors from a range of Middle Eastern countries.

The Qatari government communications office was quick to claim that hackers had

broken into the QNA website and published the fake news. However, the Qatari state television's nightly newscast had showed clips of the monarch at an official military ceremony with a scrolling ticker at the bottom of the screen showing the same remarks.

Afterwards, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates blocked access to the Qatari media, including Al Jazeera, and Egypt accused the international news channel of "inciting terrorism" and "fabricating news."

Qatari Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani then said his country was being targeted in a "hostile media campaign."

Qatar's ties with its Arab neighbors suffered a breakdown in 2014 over its support for Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood.

Back in 2014, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the UAE withdrew their ambassadors from Qatar in protest at what they called Doha's "interference in their internal affairs."