

# Riyadh Arrests Opponents Amid Talk of King's Abdication

RIYADH (Dispatches) – Saudi security forces have reportedly arrested nearly 20 people, known for opposing the absolute monarchy in the Persian Gulf kingdom, in the past 24 hours.

According to multiple unidentified sources and tweets by rights organizations, journalists and others, Prince Abdul Aziz Bin Fahd Al Saud, a son of former King Fahd, is among those arrested.

The arrests come amid reports that King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud plans to renounce power in favor of his son, Crown Prince Mohammed.

The sources said among the detainees were also two clerics, identified as Salman al-Odah and Awad al-Qarni who have sparked controversies in the past over their opinions about social life in Saudi Arabia.

Sheikh Salman al-Odah, an influential cleric who was imprisoned from 1994-99 for agitating for political change and has 14 million followers on Twitter, appears to have been detained over the weekend, the

posting suggested. In one of his last postings on Twitter, he welcomed a report on Friday suggesting that a three-month-old row between Qatar and four Arab countries led by Saudi Arabia may be resolved.

“May God harmonize between their hearts for the good of their people,” Awdah said on Twitter after a report of a telephone call between Qatar’s Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to discuss ways to resolve the rift which began in June.

Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates cut their diplomatic ties with Qatar on June 5, accusing Doha of sponsoring terrorism and destabilizing the region, charges Doha denies.

The regime forces also detained al-Qarni, another cleric with an alleged 2.2 million Twitter followers.

Exiled Saudi opposition activists have called for demonstrations on



Saudi security forces have reportedly arrested at least 20 people during 24 hours in a series of raids.

September 15 in a bid to galvanize opposition to the royal family.

Since the establishment of Saudi Arabia as an absolute monarchy in 1932, the system has been effectively known as a hereditary dictatorship and monarchy.

The kingdom is struggling with

plummeting oil prices. The Al Saud regime also faces criticism over its deadly military campaign against neighboring Yemen, which it launched on March 26.

Many also see Riyadh’s policies as a major cause of the crises in the region, especially in Syria and Iraq.

## Lebanon to Complain to UN Over Zionist Regime's Violating Airspace

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – Lebanon will file a complaint to the United Nations against the Zionist regime for violating the country's airspace and causing damage by breaking the sound barrier in the south of the country, its foreign minister said on Monday.

The occupying regime's jets flew low over the southern city of Saida on Sunday, causing sonic booms that broke windows and shook buildings

for the first time in years, Lebanese security sources and residents said.

“We have started preparing to file a complaint to the (UN) Security Council against Israel for flying its planes at low altitude... causing material, moral and sovereign damage,” Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil said in a tweet.

Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri said Lebanon would issue its complaint “against Israel for

planting spy devices on Lebanese land and continuously breaching” its airspace, his office said.

The Zionist regime's warplanes regularly enter Lebanon's airspace, the Lebanese army says, but rarely fly so low. The regime's military gave no immediate comment.

Tensions have risen recently between Lebanon's Hezbollah and the regime, which fought a month-long war in 2006.

## Zionist PM Says Will Meet Trump in New York Next Week

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says he will meet U.S. President Donald Trump later this month during a visit to New York, where he will address the United Nations General Assembly on Sept. 19.

Netanyahu spoke to reporters accompanying him on a trip to Latin America before his plane left Tel Aviv for Argentina on Sunday night. He will also visit Colombia and Mexico before heading to New York.

In Washington, the White House did not initially respond to a request for a comment on a meeting between the two leaders.

“From Mexico I will go to New York to speak at the United Nations General Assembly and there I will meet my friend, President Donald Trump,” Netanyahu said.

He added best wishes “to all our friends in the U.S. to overcome these difficult hours (during Hurricane Irma).”

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas is also set to address at the U.N.

General Assembly but there has been no word of a possible meeting between him and Netanyahu.

Netanyahu said he was the first incumbent prime minister of the occupying regime to visit South America and termed his visit as “historic”. The trip comes as Netanyahu is under investigation in two corruption cases.

One of those, known as Case 1000, involves gifts that the prime minister and his family may have received from businessmen, while Case 2000 deals with alleged efforts by him to secure better coverage from an Israeli newspaper publisher.

Netanyahu, who has been prime minister for 11 years over four terms, has denied any wrongdoing.

Netanyahu leads a relatively stable coalition and presides over a buoyant economy. His conservative Likud party has rallied behind him in the absence of clear rivals for the leadership, rebuffing calls for his departure from the center-left opposition.

## Turkey Holds Second Hearing Against Opposition Daily Staff



A protester holds Cumhuriyet daily newspaper during a demonstration before the trial of staff from Turkey's main opposition daily on September 11, 2017 in Silivri district in Istanbul.

ANKARA (Dispatches) – The staff members of Turkey's main opposition newspaper Cumhuriyet have attended a second court hearing amid rising criticism about President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's lack of tolerance for dissent.

The state-run Anadolu news agency said Monday that the

group of 19 media workers, whose trials were held at the Silivri prison court on the outskirts of Istanbul, faced various charges with sentences ranging from seven to 43 years in prison.

Among the staff members were prominent Turkish journalists, including editor-in-chief Murat

Sabuncu and columnist Kadri Gursel, who have been behind bars for almost a year, and investigative journalist Ahmet Sik, also in jail for 255 days.

More than 50,000 people have been jailed in Turkey since a failed coup against Erdogan last year. Many of them are accused of having links to Fethullah Gulen, an opposition cleric based in the United States whom Ankara accuses of having masterminded the July 2016 coup plot.

Gulen has denied any role in the coup.

Estimates suggest some 170 media workers are behind bars in Turkey on different charges, including involvement in terrorism activities. If confirmed, the figure could be a record for imprisoned journalists in a country. Most of the journalists have been arrested following the coup.

Meanwhile, Cumhuriyet employees and supporters gathered

outside the high-security Silivri prison Monday and called for the release of the paper staffers and other journalists. They held a paper's edition with a front page that was headlined “We want justice.”

Rights groups and European governments have censured Turkey's large-scale crackdown following the coup, saying the move has clearly gone beyond the rule of law. They accuse Erdogan and his ruling party of using the anti-terrorism campaign as a pretext to silence opponents.

Erdem Gul, a prominent journalist who heads the Ankara office of Cumhuriyet, said government would fail in its attempt to muzzle opposition media activists.

“It is journalism, freedom of thought and expression that are on trial,” said Gul, who himself is on trial in a separate case, adding, “But despite everything, we will continue our journalism.”

## UN Official... (Continued From Page One)

in the Cox's Bazar region of Bangladesh since Aug. 25 was 313,000, an increase of 19,000 in just 24 hours.

“Large numbers of people are still arriving every day in densely packed sites, looking for space, and there are clear signs that more will cross before the situation stabilizes,” the International Organization for Migration said in a statement.

“New arrivals in all locations are in urgent need of life-saving assistance, including food, water and sanitation, health and protection.”

Thousands of Rohingya refugees are still stranded on the Myanmar side of the River Naf, which separates the two countries, with the biggest gathering south of the town of Maungdaw, monitors and sources in the area told Reuters.

About 500 houses south of the town were set on fire on Monday, a villager in the Maungdaw region, Aung Lin, told Reuters by telephone.

“We were all running away because the army was firing on our village,” he said. “A lot of people carrying bags are now in the rice fields.”

Reuters journalists in Cox's Bazar could see huge blazes and plumes of smokes on the other side.

Elsewhere in Myanmar, communal tension appeared to be rising after more than two weeks of violence in Rakhine state.

A mob of about 70 people armed with sticks and swords threatened to attack a mosque in the central town of Taung Dwin Gyi on Sunday evening, shouting, “This is our country, this is our land,” according to the mosque's imam, Mufti Sulaiman.

“We shut down the lights in the mosque and sneaked out,” the mufti, who was in the mosque at the time, told Reuters by phone.

Rumors have spread on social media that Muslims, who make up represent about 4.3% of a population of 51.4 million, would stage attacks on Sept. 11 to avenge violence against the Rohingya.

Tensions between Buddhists and Muslims have simmered since scores were killed and tens of thousands displaced in communal clashes accompanying the onset of Myanmar's democratic transition in 2012 and 2013.

## U.S. ... (Continued From Page One)

groups fighting the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

In a letter purportedly to militant commanders and seen by Reuters, they were told that their presence in a small enclave now posed a threat to them.

The decision has caused disaffection among hundreds of militants in the two groups, who consider withdrawing into Jordan as effectively disbanding their forces, Reuters reported.

The two groups, who have hundreds of terrorists, will have to hand over heavy artillery and dozens of U.S.-made anti-tank missiles, militants say.

In a meeting on Saturday, the terrorist commanders told the joint operations center in Jordan that requested their withdrawal they would rather “stay and die” in the desert.

“We have rejected the request, since if we entered Jordan we would consider it the end,” said al-Salameh.

The military operations center has not offered them a choice to move to a U.S. garrison further east near the border with Iraq in Tanf, the militants say. That garrison, run by a separate program of the Pentagon, hosts a terrorist group known as the Maqhawir al Thwra.

Another militant official said they were not necessarily opposed to withdrawing, but they wanted assurances from Jordan they could lobby to expand to the Badia area a U.S.-Russian-brokered ceasefire, which has halted fighting in southwest Syria.

The news comes amid reports that U.S. aircraft were evacuating Daesh field commanders in Dayr al-Zawr in the face of army advances.

Last month, the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which is sympathetic to militants, reported at least five instances of U.S. airlifts of Daesh elements in Dayr al-Zawr. Washington has rejected the reports as “false.”

The U.S. has long been accused of colluding with Daesh through providing safe passage and logistical support to members of the Takfiri group in conflict zones.

Last week, Syrian government forces broke the three-year-long Daesh siege on Dayr al-Zawr, the provincial capital of the oil-rich province of the same name.

## IAEA... (Continued From Page One)

to Vienna last month to speak with Amano about Iran and asked if the IAEA planned to inspect Iranian military sites, something she has called for.

Iran dismissed the U.S. demand as “merely a dream”.

Iran has been applying an Additional Protocol, which is in force in dozens of nations and gives the IAEA access to nuclear sites to clarify questions or inconsistencies that may arise.

“We will continue to implement the Additional Protocol in Iran ... as we do in other countries,” Amano said.

In a speech last week at the American Enterprise Institute, a neoconservative think tank in Washington, Haley said Trump “has grounds” to certify the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran, if he so chooses.

Laying out the Trump administration's objections to the agreement, Haley claimed that the Islamic Republic of Iran had been “born in an act of international lawbreaking,” and suggested the very nature of the Iranian government itself made any deal undesirable.

EU countries have indicated their continued support for the deal, stating publicly that Iran has been abiding by its commitments. If Trump nonetheless goes against the expert consensus and the views of American allies to declare Iran as non-compliant, it would open the door for an eager Congress to reimpose economic sanctions that likely mean the unraveling of the deal.

Experts on U.S.-Iran relations and nuclear non-proliferation say that a unilateral American attempt to destroy the deal would be a potential disaster, the U.S. online publication The Intercept wrote.

“There is a rather deceptive argument being made by those asking Trump not to certify Iranian compliance — they are trying to deny Iran the benefits of trade and commerce that were offered during the deal, but don't want to take responsibility for pulling out of the nuclear deal itself,” said Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Washington-based Arms Control Association. “Failure to certify Iranian compliance opens the door to those in Congress, who, for political reasons or because they have donors pushing them to do so, would like to reimpose nuclear-related sanctions on Iran.”

If the U.S. is perceived as acting in bad faith to destroy the agreement, winning back support from the other P5+1 countries to reimpose extraterritorial sanctions — U.S. sanctions on other countries for doing business with Iran — would be unlikely. In addition to the EU, both Russia and China continue to express support for the deal, with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov recently stating, “It's a pity that such a successful treaty is now somewhat being cast into doubt.”

Backtracking on the deal for purely political reasons would also send other messages to the international community. Other countries might find that the U.S. is institutionally incapable of implementing difficult diplomatic agreements, at precisely a time when its relationships with allies have already become strained. Such a perception would also make it harder to conduct sensitive diplomacy in other crisis areas, including in the ongoing standoff with North Korea.

“It would be a mess in terms of diplomatic relations if the deal was terminated,” said John Tirman, executive director at the MIT Center for International Studies and an expert on U.S.-Iran relations. “There is so much that could possibly happen, including major reputational costs for the United States or economic costs globally if trade with Iran is disrupted or banned.”

## UAE... (Continued From Page 2)

which most Afghan families cannot afford. The UAE announced a partial downgrade in its Iran ties in 2016. Abu Dhabi took the move shortly after Saudi Arabia, its biggest regional ally, with whom it closely aligns its policies, broke off relations with the Islamic Republic.

The rupture came after angry protests in front of Saudi diplomatic premises in Tehran and Mashhad against the kingdom's execution early that year of its leading Shia cleric Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr.

After Riyadh severed its Iran relations, Saudi officials proceeded to level strong-worded accusations of regional intervention against Iran. Tehran has invariably spurned the claims, and instead invited Riyadh, and its regional Arab allies to dialog towards resolution of the standing issues.

## Country... (Continued From Page 2)

Zarif was also asked about restoration of ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia, which has unilaterally severed them. He said Riyadh has to reach a better understanding of the region before a normalization of ties could take place.

“We hope the Saudi government reaches a real understanding of the situation in the region and the policies it has adopted in Syria, Iraq, Bahrain, and especially Yemen, where we face a humanitarian situation,” he said.

Once Saudi Arabia gets a realistic understanding of the situation in the region, “it will see that Iran is prepared for positive interaction,” Zarif added.