

Saudi FM's Sympathy With Rohingya Muslims Mocked

RIYADH (Dispatches) – Yemen's Houthi Ansarullah movement has mocked Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir's recent condemnation of Myanmar's deadly crackdown on Rohingya Muslims while the Riyadh regime itself is killing Yemenis.

Jubeir voiced alarm over the Myanmar crisis during his address to the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. "My country is gravely concerned and condemns the policy of repression and forced displacement carried out by the government of Myanmar against the Rohingya minority," he said.

Ansarullah spokesman Mohammad Abdulsalam reacted to Jubeir's remarks, saying the top Saudi diplomat disregarded his own country's crackdown, Arabic-language al-Masirah television network reported on Sunday.

The Saudi-led coalition deserves the Nobel Peace Prize due to its crimes in Yemen, Abdulsalam added, in an apparent dig at Myanmar's de facto leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, a Nobel laureate whose silence on the ongoing atrocities has drawn international outcry.

On Sunday, five civilians were killed when Saudi warplanes bombed Shada'a District of Yemen's northwestern province of Sa'ada, reports said.

The Yemeni army fired a medium-range Qaher M-2 ballistic missile at a Saudi airbase in the kingdom's southwestern Asir region on Saturday.

Reports said that the missile had precisely hit the target but Saudi media quoted Colonel Turki al-Malki, the Saudi-led coalition spokesman, as saying that the Saudi forces had intercepted the missile.



Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir addresses the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly at the UN headquarters in New York.

Additionally, the Yemeni army destroyed two military vehicles used by mercenaries supporting former Yemeni president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi in the northern and southwestern provinces of Jawf and Lahij.

The Yemeni army also launched a mortar attack against a gathering place for pro-Hadi forces in Lahij Province, inflicting heavy losses on the militants.

An armored vehicle, which belonged to pro-Hadi mercenaries, was destroyed in the Sirwah District of Yemen's central Ma'rib Province.

Yemen has witnessed a deadly Saudi-led war since March 2015 to eliminate the Houthis and reinstall a Riyadh-friendly Hadi.

Saudi Arabia has achieved neither of the objectives despite spending billions of dollars on the war and enlisting the cooperation of dozens of its allies as well as Western countries.

The protracted Saudi offensive, which has been accompanied by a naval and aerial blockade on Yemen, has so far killed over 12,000 people and led to a humanitarian crisis and a cholera outbreak.

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Abadi also accused Kurdistan government of corruption in its handling of oil production at areas under its control, where oil revenue sharing had been a central issue of dispute between Baghdad and Erbil.

Barzani sought to solace Baghdad. "This referendum is not to draw the border of Kurdistan - this referendum is not to impose any status quo on any area, and after the referendum we are ready to start the long process of dialogue with Baghdad."

However, he emphasized the Kurds were "never going back to Baghdad to renegotiate the failed partnership we had in the past."

Barzani accused Iraq of becoming a "theocratic, sectarian state," saying his "partnership" with the Arab country was over.

In a pack distributed at the conference, Barzani said, "Kurdistan's inherent right to self-determination does not depend on the future of Iraqi conduct."

Although the referendum vote is expected to pass, some critics have accused Barzani of calling the vote in order to stoke nationalist sentiment ahead of parliamentary elections.

Most political parties in the Kurdistan parliament have supported the poll, but the second-largest party, Gorran, has criticized the calling of the referendum, labeling it "illegal".

Mudah Bakhtiar, a member of the PUK political bureau of Jalal Talabani, told journalists on Saturday that his party "believes that the alternative proposed by the UN and the major powers is acceptable."

Western countries are backing a UN-supported "alternative" plan for immediate negotiations on future relations in exchange for dropping the referendum.

There has also been controversy over the extent of the remit of the referendum, which includes a number of disputed areas including Sinjar and Kirkuk.

Kirkuk has been controlled by Kurdish militants since clashes with Daesh in 2014, when Peshmarga used a vacuum from the flight of Iraqi troops to seize the city. Kurds claim the multiethnic city, which includes Kurds, Arabs and Turkmen, as their cultural capital, and armed groups have warned they will not allow the city to return to Baghdad's control without a fight.

Abadi has warned that Iraq would have to "intervene" militarily if Iraqis were threatened with violence following the referendum.

The Turkish government, otherwise a close ally of the KRG, has threatened to close the border with the region over the poll, which has enraged nationalists who fear it could lead to similar demands from Kurds in Turkey. Ibrahim Kalin, the spokesman

for Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, wrote on Twitter Saturday, "If the referendum is not canceled, there will be serious consequences."

Kurdish leaders, he wrote, "must immediately refrain from this terrible mistake which will trigger new crises in the region."

The UN, U.S., UK and EU have also called for the referendum to be delayed or cancelled and for Erbil to resume negotiations with Baghdad.

Last week, ethnic Turkmen in Kirkuk clashed with Kurdish residents of the oil-rich city before more Peshmarga militants were deployed to rein in dissent.

The situation in the multi-ethnic city north of Baghdad is reportedly tense and residents are stocking up with supplies in anticipation of a deterioration if the referendum goes ahead. Residents were quoted as saying that food prices have gone up by 20%.

France's...

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Another finance contract was signed on Thursday, between the Iranian team and Denmark's Danske Bank which became the second European lender to ink such an agreement with Iran.

The deal is worth €500 million and sees 10 Iranian banks on the receiving end.

UK renewables investor Quercus also signed a deal worth over half a billion euros to build and operate a 600-megawatt (MW) solar farm in Iran, the company said on Wednesday.

Earlier, Norway's Scatec Solar was reported to be in talks to generate 120 megawatts of solar power in Iran, which would rise to 500 MW later.

The Oslo-listed firm's CEO Raymond Carlsen told Reuters that the initial project under discussion would cost \$120 million per 100 MW installed.

In August, Iran secured an €8-billion credit line from South Korea's Eximbank — what was seen as the country's biggest loan deal since the removal of sanctions against it in early 2016.

FM Zarif...

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the things we will discuss is the purchase of lots of beautiful military equipment because nobody makes it like the United States."

"We have said time and again and we have proven that our missiles are for defense," Zarif said.

During the Iraqi-imposed war on Iran in the 1980s, Zarif noted, Iranian cities were being "showered" by missiles of the former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, who was a "sweetheart" of the U.S. and Western countries.

At that time, Iran did not have a single missile to use as deterrence, he said.

Report:

Zionist Regime Detains Hundreds of Africans Without Trial



African refugees clash with Zionist troops after they left Holot detention center in the Negev Desert on June, 27, 2014. (Photo by AP)

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime detains hundreds of African asylum seekers without trial every year, with the approval of its top authorities, the Haaretz daily has reported, citing

data released recently.

New official figures show that the occupying regime of Israel has put a total of 311 African refugees behind bars without trial in the past 15 months, the paper said

on Sunday.

According to the figures, 223 Eritrean and Sudanese refugees were held without trial at the request of the regime's police between January 2016 and March 2017 and an additional 88 remained in detention after serving out prison sentences.

The regime's authorities justify the detentions by a law that allows the confinement of an individual whose release allegedly endangers their security, public safety or public health.

The occupying regime's top court has criticized the practice of denying freedom to the refugees who cannot be deported legally but has not prohibited the refugees' detention without trial.

Executive director of the Hotline for Refugees and Migrant Workers, a human rights organization, said the Zionist regime

had deprived 311 people of the right to due process over the past months.

"That means 311 people did not receive legal counsel or representation and were not brought to court," Reut Michaeli said.

Tel Aviv "created a separate justice system for people with a different skin color. ... If you're an African asylum seeker, your liberty is simply worth less," she added.

Meanwhile, Michal Pomerantz, a lawyer representing an African refugee in Israeli detention, said placing refugees under the so-called administrative detention instead of taking them through legal criminal proceedings infringes on their rights to fair trial.

The detention is a form of imprisonment without trial or charge that allows Israel to incarcerate people for up to six months.

Taliban Shut Down Clinics in Afghanistan's Uruzgan

KANDAHAR (Reuters) – The Taliban has shut down dozens of clinics in the southern Afghan province of Uruzgan in the past few days, officials said, amid demands for special treatment for its fighters who control most of the embattled region.

Dost Mohammad Nayab, a spokesman for the provincial governor, said authorities were talking to elders, asking them to intercede with the Taliban to allow the clinics to reopen.

"Hospitals are not places for politics and we are asking the Taliban to let our doctors and healthcare workers return," Nayab said.

Only three clinics, including the provincial hospital, were operating after the Taliban shut down 46 of the 49 treatment centers in Uruzgan since Friday, Nayab said. The Taliban were asking for special treatment for their fighters, he said.

"We have asked elders in the areas to talk to the Taliban to fix this problem," he said.

Uruzgan, which abuts the Taliban heartlands of Kandahar and Helmand, has been under intense pressure from the militants for years and the de-

fenses of the provincial capital Tarin Kot were briefly overrun last year.

A Taliban spokesman confirmed that its fighters had closed down dozens of treatment centers but said it was done because of poor services, underlining its push to replace basic government services in many areas under its control.

"In most of these centers there was no proper medication. There were no doctors or healthcare personnel," the spokesman said. "We asked repeatedly for better services but no one cared. Now if the local administration does not provide basics, we will."

The incident underlines the difficulty the Western-backed government in Kabul has in exerting control in provincial regions where the militancy is strongest.

U.S. officials estimate that the Taliban, fighting to drive out foreign forces, control or contest around 40 percent of the country, although they have not taken any major provincial city.

Uruzgan province was identified by U.S. commanders as a major priority for 2017 and there has been a big focus on bolstering Afghan forces.

Iraq Asks UN for Help to Build New Nuclear Power Reactor

NEW YORK (Dispatches) – Iraq has asked the United Nations for assistance in building a nuclear power reactor for peaceful purposes, more than 25 years after the destruction of the reactors it had under Saddam Hussein.

"Iraq calls for assistance from our kindred

nuclear countries to build a nuclear reactor for peaceful purposes ... in accordance with the non-proliferation treaty," Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafar told the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Iraq had three nuclear reactors in Tuwaitha,

its main nuclear research site, south of Baghdad. One was destroyed in an air raid by the Zionist regime, in 1981, and the two others by U.S. airplanes in the 1991 Persian Gulf war which followed Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.