

Iraqi Army Forces Retake Over Dozen Villages in Anbar

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – Iraqi government forces, backed by allied fighters from Popular Mobilization Units, have established control over more than a dozen villages in the country’s western province of Anbar as they are trying to purge the Euphrates Valley, which straddles the Iraqi-Syrian border, from the last remnants of the Daesh terrorist group.

The commander of the al-Jazira and Upper Euphrates liberation operation, Lieutenant General Abdul Amir Rashid Yarallah, said on Wednesday that army troops and pro-government fighters – better known by the Arabic name Hashd al-Sha’abi – had completely retaken 13 villages, including al-Jadish, al-Deir, al-Khour, al-Bawadiyah, al-Sammah, al-Baydhah, al-Hassaniyah, and al-Samsiyah over the past three days, and killed more than 38 Daesh extremists, Arabic-language al-Mawazin news agency reported.



Iraqi security forces gather in the Rawah area during an operation to retake the Euphrates Valley town from the Daesh terrorist group on November 11, 2017.

Yarallah noted that government forces and their allies had also detonated six car bombs, killed three bombers, and destroyed eight motorcycle bombs as well as 10 vehicles carrying personnel and military hardware to Daesh terrorists.

The senior Iraqi military official further noted that the forces had defused or detonated more than 100 improvised explosive devices during the mentioned period as well.

Yarallah went on to say that military units were continuing to ad-

vance towards the town of Rawah, located about 300 kilometers northwest of the capital Baghdad.

On November 11, Iraqi army soldiers and Hashd al-Sha’abi fighters launched a major operation to retake Rawah.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in a statement released on November 8, announced that Daesh had taken about 2,500 families, equivalent to some 10,000 individuals, hostage in Rawah.

The OHCHR also appealed to the Iraqi government and security forces involved in the Rawah liberation operation to open safe exit routes for civilians to frustrate terrorist schemes aimed at using ordinary people as human shields.

Late last month, the Iraqi prime minister formally ordered the launch of operations to purge Daesh terrorists from the towns of Rawah and al-Qa’im.

On Tuesday, Russia said U.S. warplanes tried to prevent its airstrikes against Daesh positions in Syria.

The Turkish ministry said the purpose of the YPG was not to fight Daesh “but to create illegitimate faits-accomplis on the ground, to occupy territories and to alter their demographic structures.”

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has vowed he would not allow a “terror corridor” controlled by the YPG in Syria close to Turkey’s border.

He has also warned that Turkey could yet mount a military operation against the YPG to oust the group from the northern Syrian town of Afrin.

Concerns over the Raqqa deal came to the fore this week after the BBC reported on Monday that hundreds of Daesh terrorists, including foreigners, had left Raqqa in a massive convoy assembled on October 12.

But at the time the U.S. said it was “very adamant” that foreign Daesh fighters not be allowed to leave Raqqa.

U.S. military spokesman Colonel Ryan Dillon claimed on Tuesday that “out of the 3,500 civilians that came out of... Raqqa at that time, approximately less than 300 were identified and screened as potential fighters.”

Turkey has suffered a series of attacks blamed on Daesh militants over the past two years, the latest in January at an elite Istanbul nightclub during which a Daesh gunman killed 39 people.

their destination, he continued.

Morteza Salimi, of the Iranian Red Crescent, told state TV that despite there being enough aid supplies, “there were some problems in distributing the relief... safety and security were violated.”

Iran’s deputy police chief General Eskandar Momeni visited the area and said his forces would ensure “security for the distribution of assistance.”

Deputy Health Minister Qasim Janbabaei warned of the dangers of water-borne infectious diseases amid damage to health centers and water chlorination plants. He said the area also needs antibiotics.

The region, which was already rebuilt in the decades since Iran’s 1980s war with former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, was hit by the magnitude 7.3 earthquake on Sunday night.

The Tasnim news agency put the death toll at 474, three days after the quake.

In Iraq, nine people were killed and 550 were injured, all in the country’s northern, semi-autonomous Kurdish region, according to the United Nations.

Anti-Iran ... (Continued From Page 2)

The vote took place in the General Assembly’s Third Committee, which deals with social, cultural, and humanitarian issues and includes delegates from every member-state. The final vote in the coming weeks will likely have a very similar result, as delegations seldom change their positions between the committee and plenary votes.

This year’s vote saw fewer “yes” votes than last year’s plenary decision.

The 30 “no” votes came from: Afghanistan, Armenia, Belarus, Bolivia, Brunei, Burundi, Cambodia, China, Cuba, Eritrea, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Nicaragua, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Russia, South Africa, Syria, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Vietnam and Zimbabwe.

In his speech, Al Habib also lashed out at Saudi Arabia for supporting the Canada-drafted resolution against Iran, while Riyadh itself has been blatantly violating human rights both at home and in different parts of the world.

The Iranian envoy noted that Saudi Arabia kills more children in Yemen than Al-Qaeda, Daesh and Al-Nusra put together around the globe.

“The Saudi regime being a partner in the global fight against terrorism and intolerance is blatant mockery of humanity, human rights, justice and peace,” he said.

“Spending billions of dollars buying beautiful arms and Western public relation corporations cannot hide the real face of Saudi, whose money also fuels sectarianism in the Persian Gulf, Middle East and the world,” he said.

Al Habib went on to enumerate some instances of rights violations by Saudi Arabia, including Riyadh’s crackdown on all forms of dissent across the country, particularly in the eastern city of Awamiyah, mainly populated by minority Shia Muslims.

He highlighted the slavery of hundreds of thousands of female migrant workers inside Saudi Arabia, the systemic violation of human rights of minorities there.

The Iranian official also drew attention to the Saudi massacre of thousands of Yemeni civilians during its military campaign against the impoverished country as well as the number of the kingdom’s nationals, who have joined Takfiri terror outfits such as Al-Qaeda, Daesh and Al-Nusra Front.

Yemeni Citizens ‘Besieged From Abroad, Besieged at Home’

SANAA (Press TV) – The humanitarian crisis in Yemen is deepening as the regime in Riyadh and its allies tighten the screws on all land, sea and air borders amid an international silence over the catastrophic situation in the impoverished Arab country.

According to the UN’s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), prices have soared in the Yemeni capital, Sana’a, since the military coalition led by Saudi Arabia upped the pressure on Yemen a week ago.

The UN aid chief Mark Lowcock has told the UN Security Council that unless the Saudi-led blockade is lifted, Yemen will face “the largest famine the world has seen for many decades, with millions of victims.”

The UN has already warned that seven million people in Yemen are on the verge of starvation.

Jamie McGoldrick, the UN’s aid coordinator in Yemen, said keeping the Yemeni ports closed was unacceptable. “We can’t have those ports closed or those airports closed while we wait for discussions

on new (inspection) mandates to go ahead,” McGoldrick said, adding, “The humanitarian impact of what is happening here right now is unimaginable.”

The cost of fuel has gone up by nearly two-thirds in Sana’a. The price of trucked water has increased by 133 percent and bus fares have doubled or even tripled.

“We are besieged from abroad, we are besieged at home. We don’t have gas to cook. People are dying in their houses because of the gas shortages,” said Ameen Mohammed, a Yemeni citizen living in Sana’a. “Why are they besieging Yemen? What do they get out of it?”

“We’ve been here for almost one week, waiting for fuel,” said Fuad al-Harazi, another citizen. “Every day they say the fuel truck is here but that isn’t true.”

Amer Ali, a local employee, echoed the despair. “The higher price of fuel is making the food prices go way up. The average person can’t survive.”

At a hospital bed in Sana’a, Mohammed al-



A Yemeni kid receives treatment at a hospital after he was reportedly injured in a Saudi airstrike on Ta'izz, November 14, 2017.

Ayzari, a physician, said, “The malnutrition cases are up more than ever before.”

“There is an acute shortage of medical supplies and laboratory materials,” Ayzari added.

Aoun also hit out at Saudi Arabia, saying they were holding Hariri’s family.

“We have not previously asked for their return, but we have confirmed they are also detained and family members are being searched as they enter and leave the house,” Aoun said in a statement reported by local media outlets.

Britain’s Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson also called for Hariri’s return to Lebanon without further delay.

“Lebanon’s stability is important, and its removal from any regional conflicts,” Johnson said after a meeting with Lebanese Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil at the British Foreign Ministry in London Wednesday.

Bassil stressed the priority of Hariri’s return, saying that President Aoun will listen carefully to all issues to discuss.

“Lebanon’s stability is equal to the regions and the whole world’s stability, especially because Lebanon has sensitive issues such as Syrian refugees,” Bassil said.

Later Wednesday, Bassil met with his Italian counterpart where the two discussed the ongoing situation in Lebanon after Hariri’s resignation.

Bassil arrived in Europe for meetings with senior officials from the EU and member states. On Tuesday, he met separately with French Pres-

ident Emmanuel Macron as well as with EU High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini.

Military...

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“We wish to make it abundantly clear that this is not a military takeover,” the army statement said. “We are only targeting criminals around (Mugabe) who are committing crimes that are causing social and economic suffering in the country in order to bring them to justice.”

The statement called on troops to return to barracks immediately, with all leave canceled.

Overnight, at least three explosions were heard in the capital, Harare, and military vehicles were seen in the streets.

The military actions appear to put the army in control of the country. Army commander Constantino Chiwenga had threatened on Monday to “step in” to calm political tensions. Mugabe’s ruling ZANU-PF party responded by accusing the general of “treasonable conduct.” But now Chiwenga appears to be in control.

The army has been praised by the nation’s war veterans for carrying out “a bloodless correction of gross abuse of power.” The

military will return Zimbabwe to “genuine democracy” and make the country a “modern model nation,” said Chris Mutsvangwa, chairman of the war veterans’ association, told The Associated Press in Johannesburg.

Mutsvangwa and the war veterans are staunch allies of Emmerson Mnangagwa, who was fired from his post of vice president by Mugabe last week. Mnangagwa fled Zimbabwe last week but said he would return to lead the country.

The U.S. Embassy closed to the public Wednesday and encouraged citizens to shelter in place, citing “the ongoing political uncertainty through the night.” The British Embassy issued a similar warning, citing “reports of unusual military activity.”

For the first time, this southern African nation is seeing an open rift between the military and Mugabe, the world’s oldest head of state who has ruled since independence from white minority rule in 1980. The military has been a key pillar of his power.

Turkey...

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Ankara has long lambasted Washington for working with and arming the YPG as the main U.S. ally in the purported fight against Daesh.

Saudis...

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criticism of Saudi Arabia, saying that Riyadh has carried out an act of aggression against Lebanon.

“We consider Prime Minister Saad Hariri as being detained in Saudi Arabia and this is an act of aggression against Lebanon,” Aoun said during a meeting with the National Audio Visual Council.

Aoun said that nothing justified Hariri’s continued stay in Saudi Arabia, now into day 12. “This contradicts the Vienna Treaty and human rights,” Aoun was quoted as saying via the president’s Twitter account.

“Don’t be scared, economically, financially or security-wise. The country is safe and national unity supports security,” Aoun added. “We cannot keep waiting and lose time, because state affairs cannot be put on hold.”

Reiterating his previous comments regarding Hariri’s resignation, Aoun said that it wasn’t possible to complete the resignation formality as Hariri had announced it “from abroad.”

Aoun added: “He needs to return to Lebanon to submit his resignation or withdraw it, or discuss the reasons for it and the solutions.”

Later Wednesday, Hariri tweeted again stating that he was “fine and will return to Lebanon soon, as promised.”

Leader...

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Because of a lack of public order, some dispatches of aid deliveries were “blocked” before reaching