

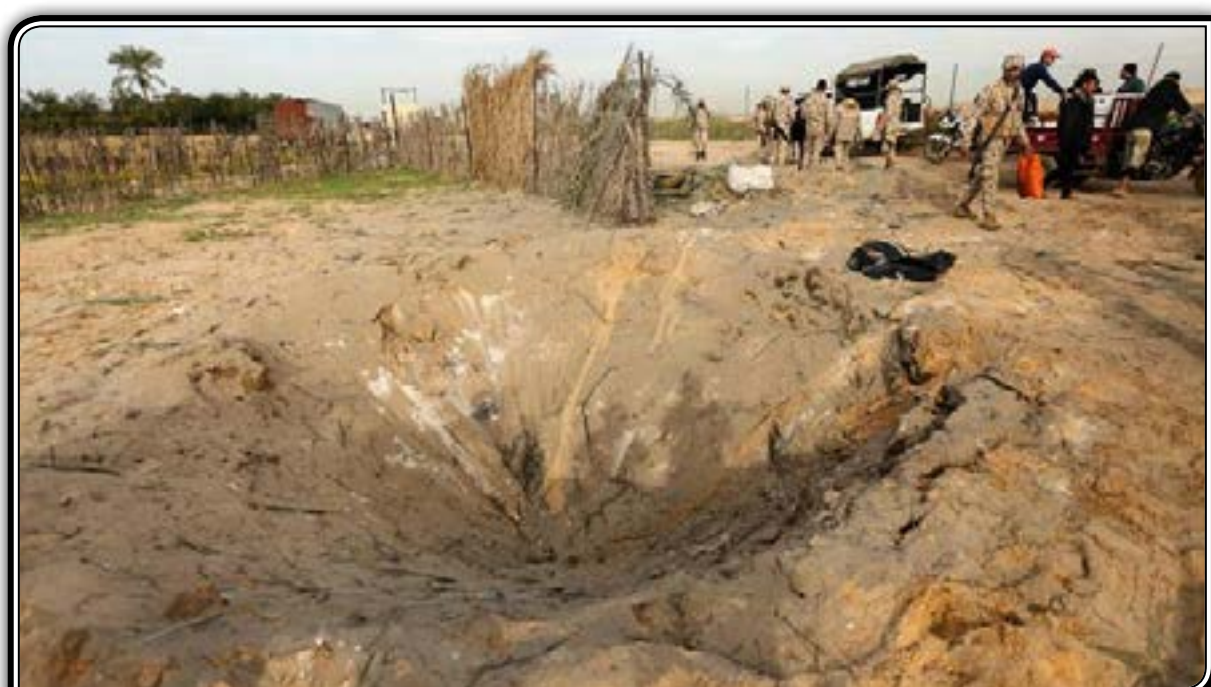
DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – Daesh terrorists unleashed Wednesday an offensive in the south of Damascus, a monitoring group reported.

The Daesh terrorists attacked areas held by the pro-government fighters in the Tadamun neighborhood south of the capital Damascus, said the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

He who is greedy is disgraced; he who discloses his hardship will always be humiliated; he who has no control over his tongue will often have to face discomfort.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

Zionist Jets Strike Gaza Amid al-Quds Tensions



Palestinians stand near an area in Beit Lahia in northern Gaza strip reportedly hit by an Israeli strike on December 12, 2017.

GAZA STRIP (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime’s war jets struck early on Wednesday morning two military posts that belong to resistance Hamas movement in southern Gaza Strip of Khan Younis and south of Gaza City, security sources and paramedics in Gaza said.

two posts but no injuries were reported, according to the sources.

Tension has been escalating in Gaza and the West Bank between the Zionist regime and the Palestinians since the declaration of U.S. President Donald Trump last week that al-Quds is the capital of the Zionist regime.

On Tuesday, an Israeli unmanned

aerial vehicle carried out an attack in the besieged Gaza Strip, killing at least two people along a road in Um al-Nasser village. The two slain Palestinians were reportedly members of the engineering unit of al-Quds Brigades, which is the military wing of the Islamic Jihad resistance movement.

Zionist troops also targeted several

positions belonging to the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas in the Gaza Strip with land and air attacks. The occupying regime’s army claimed that the attacks were in response to rocket fire from the Gaza Strip into an unpopulated area in the occupied territories without causing any injuries.

The Gaza Strip, home to 1.8 million, has been under siege by the Zionist regime since June 2007. The blockade has caused a decline in the standards of living as well as unprecedented levels of unemployment and unrelenting poverty.

The Tel Aviv regime has also waged several wars on Gaza since 2008, killing and maiming thousands of Gazans.

The dramatic shift in Washington’s al-Quds policy drew fierce criticism from the international community, including the United States’ Western allies, and triggered demonstrations against the U.S. and the Zionist regime worldwide.

Al-Quds remains at the core of the Zionist-Palestinian conflict, with Palestinians hoping that the eastern part of the city would eventually serve as the capital of a future independent Palestinian state.

Mass arrests
Zionist troops raided several Palestinian homes in the West Bank towns and cities of al-Quds, Nablus, Ramallah, Jenin and al-Khalil early Wednesday, arresting 32 people, including 20 Hamas officials.

Zionist Troops, Palestinian Demonstrators Clash in Bethlehem



A Palestinian protester throws back a tear gas canister towards Zionist troops during clashes in the West Bank city of Bethlehem on December 10, 2017.

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – Zionist troops have clashed with Palestinians protesting against the new U.S. policy on al-Quds in the West Bank city of Bethlehem.

The Palestinians carrying national flags took to the Bethlehem streets on Wednesday, for the seventh consecutive day since U.S. President Donald Trump’s recognition of al-Quds as the “capital” of the occupying regime.

The Zionist troops used tear gas to disperse the demonstrators.

Latest reports say some 40 Palestinians, among them officials from the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas, were detained by Zionist troops during raids on the West Bank cities over the past few hours.

On December 6, Trump declared that Washington was recognizing al-Quds as the “capital” of the regime and that he had instructed his administration to begin the process of moving the American embassy from Tel Aviv to the holy city.

The decision sparked a wave of global condemnations, demonstrations and warnings of further conflagration in the Middle East.

The entire al-Quds is currently under the Zionist regime’s control, while the regime also claims the city’s eastern part, which hosts the third holiest Muslim site. The city has been designated as

“occupied” under international law since the 1967 Arab War, which Palestinians want as the capital of their future state.

‘Al-Quds Capital of Palestine’

Scores of Israeli Arabs have taken to the streets of Tel Aviv to vent their anger at U.S. President Donald Trump’s new policy on al-Quds, saying the ancient city is the capital of Palestine, not that of the occupying entity.

The demonstrators, among them Arab members of the Zionist regime’s parliament, rallied outside the U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv on Tuesday night.

Carrying Palestinian flags, the protesters chanted slogans such as, “Trump, Israel, Jerusalem (al-Quds) is Arab. Jerusalem is Muslim,” “capital of Palestine,” “Trump=new Balfour,” referring to the 1917 Balfour Declaration that paved the way for the creation of the Israeli entity.

They also carried signs and banners reading, “The United States is the snake itself,” “Trump’s decision violates international law,” “Hands off al-Quds” and “America isolated itself from the international community.”

The event was organized by the Higher Arab Monitoring Committee, an independent political organization that coordinates the activities of various Israeli Arab bodies.

Amnesty:

Bahraini Activist Detained for Fighting for Freedom of Speech

MANAMA (Press TV) – Amnesty International has denounced the continued detention of prominent Bahraini human rights activist and pro-democracy campaigner Nabeel Rajab, stressing that the Manama regime is keeping him behind for no reason other than the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression.

The London-based non-governmental organization, in a post published on its Arabic Twitter page, called on Bahraini authorities to immediately and unconditionally release the 52-year-old president of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, Arabic-language Lualua TV network reported on Wednesday.

It added that the “prisoner of conscience” must not be subjected to torture or any form of ill-treatment, stressing that constant contact with family members and lawyers of choice in addition to access to adequate health care must be offered to Rajab.

Bahrain’s High Court of Appeal decided late last month to uphold a two-year jail term against Rajab in an attempt to suppress his fundamental right to freedom of opinion.

The charges stem from Rajab’s television interviews with foreign journalists, where he shed light on the grim situation of human rights in Bahrain and said the Manama regime does not allow human rights rapporteurs to enter the tiny Persian Gulf kingdom.

He faces a further 15 years in prison over a separate set of charges related to his criticism of the ruling Al Khalifah family and the Wahhabi ideology.

On November 19, a Manama court postponed until December 31 the trial of the prominent Bahraini human rights activist.

On December 22, 2016, Bahraini authorities accused Rajab of making comments that “harm the interests” of the Manama regime and other Persian Gulf kingdoms through an article attributed to him and published by French daily Le Monde.

The article slammed the Daesh terrorist group for their crimes against

humanity. It also condemned Persian Gulf Arab countries for their failure to stop the spread of the violent Wahhabi ideology.

Thousands of anti-regime protesters have held demonstrations in Bahrain on an almost daily basis ever since a popular uprising began in the country in mid-February 2011.

They are demanding that the Al Khalifah dynasty relinquish power and allow a just system representing all Bahrainis to be established.

Manama has gone to great lengths to clamp down on any sign of dissent. On March 14, 2011, troops from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were deployed to assist Bahrain in its crackdown.

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Tillerson: U.S. Embassy Unlikely to Move to al-Quds Before 2020

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson says the U.S. embassy in the Israeli-occupied territories was unlikely to be moved to al-Quds before 2020, national media outlets reported.

“It’s not going to be anything that happens right away,” U.S. news daily the New York Times quoted Tillerson’s speech at the State Department to report on Tuesday. “Probably no earlier than three years out, and that’s pretty ambitious,” the head of the State Department added.

U.S. President Donald Trump announced on Wednesday the recognition of al-Quds as the Zionist regime’s capital and his intention of

moving the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to al-Quds.

The declaration serves “the interest of the United States and the peace between Israel and the Palestinians,” said Trump at a televised speech.

Speaking of the moving of the U.S. embassy, Trump said the State Department will immediately begin to hire architects and engineers, so as to make the new embassy “a magnificent tribute to peace” when completed.

Trump’s decision, which was seen as undermining the Middle East peace process and further destabilizing the region, has drawn condemnation and opposition globally.

Saudi King Salman ‘Determined’ to Confront Corruption

RIYADH (Reuters) – Saudi Arabia’s King Salman bin Abdulaziz said on Wednesday his government was determined to confront corruption with “justice and decisiveness”, signaling continued support for a crackdown on sleaze involving mass arrests of top Saudis including royals.

In a televised speech to the country’s consultative Shura council, Salman also said the world’s largest oil exporter will work to enable the private sector to become a partner in the kingdom’s economic diversification drive away from petroleum.

Saudi security forces rounded up hundreds of members of the political and business elite, including princes and tycoons, in early November. Riyadh said it was a crackdown on corruption but the move was also widely seen as helping Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman tighten his grip on power.

The purge has caused concern about damage to the economy, especially among foreign investors the kingdom is seeking to attract. But the government has insisted it is respecting due process and that the companies of detained businessmen will continue operating normally.

In a speech focused on economic issues, Salman said the kingdom was pushing ahead with its “Vision 2030” economic reform plan to find new sources of revenue for the OPEC powerhouse.

But he said that corruption was one of the main threats to economic development.

“We have decided, with God’s help, to confront it (corruption) with justice and decisiveness so that our country can enjoy the renaissance and development that every citizen aspires for,” he said.

Signaling his support for the campaign of arrests, he said that he had ordered the formation of a higher committee against corruption headed by the crown prince.

“Thanks be to God that those are a