

## U.S. Sends Troopst to Kirkuk

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – Head of Iraq's Badr Organization has disclosed that the U.S. Army has sent troops and advanced military equipment to K1 military base in Kirkuk province. "New U.S. military convoys comprising advanced military vehicles and equipment together with fresh troops have arrived in K1 military base in Kirkuk province in Northern Iraq," the Arabic-language al-Maloume news website quoted Mohammad Mehdi al-Bayati as saying. Al-Bayati pointed to the U.S. Army's increased patrol near Kirkuk and asked the Baghdad government to show reaction to the U.S. Army's presence and ask for the cause of its deployment in Kirkuk province.

The sin which makes you sad and repentant is more liked by Allah than the good deed which turns you arrogant.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

# UK Arms Sales to Saudi Causing 'Significant' Civilian Deaths in Yemen

LONDON (Dispatches) – British arms sales to Saudi Arabia are causing "significant civilian casualties" in Yemen and are probably illegal, a UK damning parliamentary report says.

British Prime Minister Theresa May's refusal to curb weapons exports has been condemned by peers who conclude it is "on the wrong side" of international humanitarian law.

The prime minister has faced down calls for a ban – on sales worth a staggering £4.7bn since the brutal war in Yemen began in 2015 – despite the growing humanitarian disaster.

An estimated 85,000 children under the age of five have died from extreme hunger or disease in a war between a Saudi-led coalition and Iran-backed rebels. Up to 14 million people are at risk of famine.

Independent experts have highlighted "extraordinary rates of civilian deaths by airstrikes" carried out by the Saudi coalition,



Britain has signed off £3.3 billion in arms sales to Saudi Arabia since March 26, 2015, when it launched a war in Yemen.

with about 166 people dying every month last autumn.

Now the House of Lords International Relations Committee says the prime minister must rein in arms sales to Riyadh "as a matter of urgency" – describing the situation in the country as "unconscionable".

"We do not agree with the govern-

ment's assertion that it is narrowly on the right side of international humanitarian law in the case of licensing arms exports to the Saudi-led coalition," said Lord Howell, its Conservative chairman.

"It is narrowly on the wrong side: given the volume and type of arms being exported to the Saudi-led co-

alition, we believe they are highly likely to be the cause of significant civilian casualties in Yemen, risking the violation of international humanitarian law.

"The government must address the root causes of the suffering – the conflict itself – and be prepared to suspend some key export licenses to Saudi Arabia and members of the coalition."

The brutal war is being led by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the kingdom's de facto ruler, who wishes to reinstate Yemen's fugitive former president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, and destroy the Houthi Ansarullah movement.

Thousands of civilians have been killed, while thousands more have been injured. Collapsed infrastructure coupled with a partial blockade has also deprived most of the population of clean water and proper healthcare, while unleashing the worst cholera outbreak in modern history.

## Erdogan Dissatisfied With U.S. Reluctance to Jointly Produce Patriot Systems

ANKARA (Dispatches) – Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has noted that the United States cannot fulfill Ankara's two basic conditions for acquiring Patriot surface-to-air missile (SAM) system, of providing credit and joint production.

"Joint production, providing a loan and early delivery are criteria that we attach importance to. Although they [the United States] are positive for early delivery, they can't promise to provide credit and joint production", Erdogan told reporters, as quoted by the Hurriyet Daily News media outlet.

The Turkish president also reaffirmed his country's commitment to purchase Russian-

made S-400 Triumph (NATO reporting name SA-21 Growler) air defense systems.

"We have made the S-400 deal with Russia. Therefore, a step back is out of the question. This is over... We are working for the deployment of S-400s in July as promised", the Turkish president noted.

Erdogan was quoted by Turkish broadcaster NTV on Saturday as saying that there was no turning back on the S-400 deal with Russia, and that Turkey was also interested in purchasing US Patriot missiles as long as Ankara's interests were served.

"We have made the S-400 deal with Russia, so it is out of question to take a step back.

The job is done. When it comes to the Patriots, we are open to buying them. However, this purchase needs to serve the interests of our country," Erdogan told journalists on the way back from a trilateral summit in the Russian city of Sochi, where he met his Russian and Iranian counterparts to discuss developments in Syria.

"We are continuing our work based on the deal that the S-400s will be delivered in July," the Turkish president added.

Moscow and Ankara reached a final agreement on the delivery of the S-400 missile systems in December 2017.

Turkey, which is a NATO country, has on several occasions stated that it is commit-

ted to buying the Russian missile defense system, despite concerns among members of the U.S.-led military alliance that the S-400s cannot be integrated into the NATO air defense system.

Washington had set an informal deadline of February 15 for Ankara to respond to the rival US offer, warning to withdraw its offer to sell a \$3.5 billion Raytheon Co Patriot missile package if Turkey proceeded with the S-400 purchase.

U.S. officials also announced that the deal would jeopardize Turkey's purchase of Lockheed Martin Corp F-35 fighter jets and possibly result in the United States imposing sanctions.

## Ankara Determined to Take Khashoggi Case to Int'l Court

ANKARA (Dispatches) – Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan says his country is working to carry the case of the murder of Saudi dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul to an international court.

Speaking in an interview with the A-Haber television channel, Erdogan said Ankara "is determined to bring this case before international justice," and calls on the United States to weigh in this case.

"We are determined to take this matter to the international court. Our justice ministry, foreign ministry and intelligence agency are working on this matter."

In October, a few weeks after the killing, four prominent rights groups - Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the Committee to Protect Journalists and Reporters Without Borders - urged the Turkish government to ask the UN to probe into the disappearance of the ill-fated journo.

Erdogan further criticized the U.S. for "casting aside" the case of Khashoggi due to its bilateral ties with Saudi Arabia, urging Washington to "put its presence and weight" behind the issue.

"The CIA has not yet put its full weight behind this issue. We have a lot of expectations from the US on this matter. The US needs to put its presence, its weight here," he said.

Erdogan also noted that Turkey has not yet revealed all the information it has discovered about the killing of Khashoggi.

"We haven't given all the elements we have at our disposal," he noted.

After weeks of denial, Saudi Arabia admitted that Khashoggi had been killed on October 2 after entering the consulate to obtain the paperwork necessary for his upcoming marriage to Turkish woman Hatice Cengiz.

Turkey has said the journalist was killed by a team of 15 Saudis who strangled him, and Ankara has repeatedly asked Riyadh to identify the local who allegedly helped them dispose of the body, which has not been found.

Istanbul's police department says the body of Saudi opposition journalist Jamal Khashoggi might have been burnt in an oven installed in the Saudi Consulate General in Istanbul.

"An oven was found in the building of the Saudi Consulate General. According to experts, it can

heat up to 1,000 degrees Celsius, destroying any biological tissue and leaving no possibility to detect any DNA traces", the police statement says.

The Saudi diplomatic mission ordered 32 servings of raw meat from one of the Istanbul restaurants after the murder of Khashoggi, the police noted.

"The question is whether it was pre-planned. It will be investigated", the statement says.

Meanwhile, Republican and Democratic members of the U.S. Senate asked the Trump administration on Thursday to tell them more about the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi at a Saudi consulate last year, days after a missed deadline for a detailed report on his death prompted an angry bipartisan backlash.

Ten of the 12 Republicans from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, led by Chairman Jim Risch, wrote to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo asking for more information.

"The Senate Foreign Relations Committee is committed to pursuing all information available in its oversight role and, to that end, is in the process of arranging a classified briefing for the committee," Risch said in a statement.

## UN Warns of Worsening Humanitarian Situation in Gaza



Palestinian children look through a hole in a sheet metal fence outside their home in a poor neighborhood in Gaza City on August 8, 2017.

GAZA STRIP (Dispatches) – The United Nations has warned that the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip besieged by the Zionist regime and Egypt is deteriorating due to a decade-long blockade, calling for an "immediate" end to the crisis.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in an address to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People that approximately two million Palestinians in Gaza "remain mired in increasing poverty and unemployment, with no access to adequate health, education, water and electricity," leaving young people with "little prospect of a better future."

Guterres further called on the Tel Aviv regime to "lift restrictions on the movement of people and goods, which also hamper the efforts of the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies, without naturally jeopardizing legitimate security concerns."

The secretary general commended the UN agency for Palestinian refugees known as UNRWA for its "critical work" in Gaza, the occupied West Bank and across the

region, urging the international community to "significantly" increase efforts to revitalize Gaza's economy.

He further slammed as "illegal" the Zionist regime's continued land expropriation and settlement expansion policies in the occupied territories, saying the settlement activities "deepen the sense of mistrust and undermine" the so-called two-state solution.

More than half a million Zionists live in over 120 settlements built since Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank in 1967. Much of the international community considers the settler units illegal and subject to the Geneva Conventions, which forbid construction on occupied land.

The UN has warned that the blockade would render it uninhabitable by 2020, but on Wednesday the UN agency said conditions "are worse" than when they made that prediction.

According to the UN development agency (UNCTAD) the decade-long siege and three Israeli-imposed wars have "eviscerated" Gaza's productive capacity.

## Palestinians Patrol al-Khalil After Zionist Regime Expels Monitors

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – Palestinians are patrolling al-Khalil to document violence by settlers after the Zionist regime's expulsion of international observers last month.

The occupying regime expelled the unarmed civilian observers after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he "will not allow the continuation of an international force that acts against us."

The international mission, known as TIPH, was established after a settler opened fire on Muslim worshippers at the Ibrahim Mosque in 1994, killing 29 people and wounding over 100 others.

Until recently, the mission stationed observers from Norway, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey to report on violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws in the divided city.

Al-Khalil, the West Bank's largest city, is a frequent flashpoint between Israeli settlers and Palestinians. Over 200,000 Palestinians live in the city, along with several hundred extremist settlers who live in heavily fortified enclaves protected by the military.

Palestinians frequently must pass through Zionist checkpoints in the area of the settler enclaves, restrictions that have hit the once-thriving city center and forced many businesses to close.

They are also a constant target of settler violence, which has prompted Palestinian activists to fill the void by launching their own patrols to document attacks.

Armed with video cameras and donning blue vests, the activists say they have enlisted 18 volunteers and begun work since Sunday.

"By expelling the international monitors, the Israeli government wanted to hide the Israeli settlers' and soldiers' violations, but we will not let them get away with that," Issa Amro, an activist leader, told the Associated Press.

"We will document any attack by photos and words, and we will circulate it all over the world."

Amro said they began by escorting Palestinian students to school in al-Khalil's Israeli-controlled downtown area.

Hundreds of Palestinian students study in schools in al-Khalil's Old City where altercations between Palestinians and Israelis are not uncommon.