

By Forming Elaborate Opposition in Europe

Exiled Royal Pushing Regime Change in Saudi Arabia

BERLIN (Press TV) – An exiled Saudi prince has formed a Europe-based opposition movement seeking to change the regime in Saudi Arabia and end human rights abuses in the repressive country.

Prince Khaled bin Farhan Al Saud, who fled to Germany in 2007 citing fears of arrest by the kingdom's authorities, has named the opposition group the Freedom Movement of Arabian Peninsula People, he told The Independent.

The movement primarily seeks to campaign for the realization of a "constitutional monarchy" in Saudi Arabia as well as elections to appoint a prime minister and cabinet. Such changes, Prince Farhan hopes, would replace the current absolute monarchical regime, which is run by an exclusive branch of the Saud family.

The measures are aimed at ending "endemic" rights violations and inequality in the kingdom and "ultimately" placing power in the hands of the people, the daily cited Prince Farhan as saying.

The movement will also be trying to protect those dissidents who flee Saudi Arabia, including

by providing them with lawyers, specialist translators, and access to the media to help them seek asylum in Europe.

"We need a new system in Saudi Arabia like other democracies, where the people have the right to elect a government, to create a new Saudi Arabia," the 41-year-old Saudi prince said. "We have a vision for the judicial system, for human rights and accountability; but right now, we need to focus on the constitution and on activism to help Saudis in Europe."

Pointing to the plight of fugitive Saudi dissenters, Farhan said, "I felt this suffering myself. I want to help others who faced the same problems as me."

He was referring to the threats he received from Saudi authorities — right before he fled to Germany — of detainment due to his criticism of the ruling family, as well as repeated attempts by Saudi officials to lure him into the country's diplomatic missions abroad.

In October last year, Saudi authorities notoriously lured US-based Saudi critic Jamal Khashoggi into the Saudi con-



Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud (R) and his son, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman

sulate in Istanbul, Turkey, where they killed and dismembered him on an order from Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, according to the CIA.

"When you make calls against the government, you need help," Prince Farhan said, hinging at the dangers Saudi dissidents face.

Farhan hails from a group of royals who has fallen out with Mohammed.

The heir to the Saudi throne has been at the center of numerous

controversies.

He launched a Saudi-led war against Yemen in 2015. The war has so far killed tens of thousands and turned the already-impooverished country into the scene of the world's biggest humanitarian disaster.

Recently, there have been increasing rumors that King Salman himself has developed a negative view of his son due to the many controversies that he has caused, according to The Guardian.

Video Shows Zionist Troops Beating Handcuffed Palestinian Men



This file photo shows a Palestinian teenage boy being arrested by Zionist troops for throwing stones during a protest in the occupied West Bank.

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – Footage of Zionist troops beating and humiliating a father and son

tied up and blindfolded on the floor of a military jeep has been released by an Israeli military court.

The court unsealed chilling footage of radical Zionist troops laughing as they beat a handcuffed Palestinian father and his teenage son, who were captured in a raid. The video was evidence in a detainee abuse trial, RT reported.

The footage shows soldiers from the ultra-Orthodox 97th Netzah Yehuda Battalion of the Zionist troops abusing two handcuffed and blindfolded Palestinian detainees inside a military vehicle.

After striking a plea deal, the five troops were found guilty of abuse and sentenced to serve between two and six-and-a-half months in prison.

The shocking case garnered much attention in the occupied

territories.

TV presenter Oshrat Kotler said that young IDF soldiers become "human animals" after they return from the West Bank. "That's the result of the occupation" of Palestinian lands, she said. The journalist's comments were met with both backlash and support.

The Zionist troops have been repeatedly accused of mistreating Palestinians during arrests and while in custody. Last year, a 33-year-old man died hours after he was severely beaten during an arrest amid clashes in Jericho, in the West Bank. Footage from the scene showed the soldiers gun-butting him as he was lying on the ground. The Zionist troops claimed that the man had tried to attack them.

Russia Warns of Outbreaks of Dangerous Diseases in Syria's Rukban

MOSCOW (Sputnik) – There is a threat of outbreaks of dangerous diseases in Syria's Rukban refugee camp, located in the U.S.-controlled zone in Syria's At-Tanf, since landfill and burial sites are situated close to places where refugees reside and drinking water is handed out, the Russian Center for Reconciliation in Syria says.

"There is a trend toward the deterioration of the sanitary-epidemiological situation in the camp. According to satellite photographs, waste dumps and chaotic burial sites on the territory of the camp are situated in immediate proximity of refugees' places of residence and sites where water is distributed which creates a risk of outbreaks of dangerous diseases," the center's head Col. Gen. Viktor Kupchishin said.

He added that a humanitarian corridor had been established for the return of internally displaced persons from Syria's At-Tanf zone to their permanent places of residence in order to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe in the camp.

The center's head recalled that the Syrian government had undertaken to guarantee the security of temporarily displaced persons and ensure a simplified procedure for the restoration of their documents.

The Rukban camp, which is situated in the U.S.-controlled zone surrounding its military base in Al-Tanf, is believed to host around 40,000 refugees, who not only reside in unsanitary conditions but also face spreading diseases and violence.

In January, the World Health Organization described people residing in the camp as "trapped," adding that they live "in deplorable conditions." Limited water supply, bitterly cold weather and poorly functioning health care facilities contribute to the rise of diseases, which include influenza, measles, tuberculosis and chronic respiratory diseases, according to the organization.

The Russian Center for Reconciliation in Syria has repeatedly slammed Washington for preventing refugees from leaving the site.

300 Daesh Terrorists, Families Hide in Northern Iraq

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – Up to 300 Daesh terrorists and their family members are sheltering in a mountain in Iraq's northern province of Nineveh, a local newspaper reported Wednesday.

The 300 are sheltering "in Qara-Chokh Mountain near the town of Makhmour, about 60 km southeast of Nineveh's provincial capital Mosul," the independent al-Mashriq newspaper quoted Ghayath

al-Sorachi, a leading figure in the Kurdish Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), as saying.

"Their presence in the mountain is a threat to the security situation in surrounding areas," al-Sorachi added.

He warned of security breaches from the mountain because no clear operation or airstrikes have been conducted yet by the security forces and U.S.-led coalition.

The security situation in Iraq has dramatically improved after Iraqi security forces fully defeated the Daesh terrorists across the country late in 2017.

Daesh remnants, however, have since melted in urban areas or resorted to deserts and rugged areas as safe havens, carrying out guerilla attacks from time to time against security forces and civilians.

Official ...

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naval officers last week that Iran was still resorting to clandestine measures to ship fuel.

Iran's Minister of Defense Amir Hatami was quoted as saying by the state news agency IRNA that Tehran had the military capabilities to confront any Zionist intervention, and said the international community would also not accept such action.

Hatami said such confrontation would be considered as "piracy" and warned that "if it happens, we will firmly respond."

"The Iranian armed forces have certainly the capabilities to protect the country's shipping lines in the best way against any possible threat," Hatami said.

Iran's navy has extended its reach in recent years, dispatching vessels to the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden. They intervened on Friday to repel pirates who attacked an Iranian oil tanker in the Gulf of Aden.

An Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) commander also said on Wednesday that enemies will regret any confrontation with the Islamic Republic.

"We never welcome any war, but we are ready to respond to any invasion. We hope the aggressors do not need to understand this point by trying it and paying a high price," Major General Gholamali Rashid was quoted as saying by Tasnim news agency.

The Zionist navy, whose largest vessels are missile corvettes and a small submarine fleet, is mostly active in the Mediterranean and Red seas.

Iran has one of the world's biggest tanker fleets in the world. In November, U.S. Special Representative for Iran Brian Hook called Iranian vessels a "floating liability", saying the U.S. sanctions would bar them from international insurance markets, making them a risk for ports and canals which allow them access.

Iranian officials have threatened to block the Strait of Hormuz, a major oil shipping route in the Persian Gulf, if the United States attempts to stop the Islamic Republic's oil exports.

Netanyahu...

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attacked Erdogan "for exposing him" after the Zionist premier's "racist remarks" towards Arabs and Muslims.

"The apartheid regime he leads occupies Palestinian lands, kills women & children & imprisons Palestinians in their own land," he wrote.

Turkey and the occupying regime in 2016 ended a six-year rift triggered by the Israeli storming of a Gaza-bound ship that left 10 Turkish activists dead and led to a downgrading of diplomatic ties.

Netanyahu has been accused by critics of demonizing Israeli Arabs, who make up some 17.5 percent of the population, in a bid to boost right-wing turnout for April polls.

After the polls, Netanyahu will also face a hearing to defend himself against corruption allegations which have dogged his campaign.

"That robber at the helm of Israel is currently on trial," Erdogan also said, referring to the Zionist leader.

Netanyahu is facing a tough challenge from a centrist political alliance led by former military chief of staff Benny Gantz and ex-finance minister Yair Lapid.

Netanyahu's initial comment had come amid an online spat sparked by the occupying regime's right-wing firebrand culture minister Miri Regev, ahead of the April elections and subsequently joined by Israeli Hollywood star Gal Gadot.

Regev, a member of Netanyahu's right-wing Likud party, had in a TV interview warned voters not to support its main rival because it would ally with Israeli Arab parties -- a highly unlikely scenario.

Israeli model and actress Rotem Sela responded on Instagram, asking: "When the hell will someone in this regime convey to the public that Israel is a state of all its citizens and that all people were created equal?"

Netanyahu reacted with his own Instagram post, telling Sela: "Israel is not a state of all its citizens."

"According to the basic nationality law we passed, Israel is the nation state of the Jewish people -- and only it," he said, referring to a deeply controversial piece of legislation passed by his right-wing government last year.

U.S. ...

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trade with Iran. After months of foot-dragging, in January Europe announced the Instrument In Support Of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX) to run a payments channel that would allow goods to be bartered between European and Iranian companies without the need for direct financial transactions. This would eliminate banking transactions that would violate U.S. sanctions.

The U.S. has cautioned Europe on doing business with Iran but has refrained from directly challenging INSTEX as a sanctions-busting mechanism.

The European trade mechanism is still not operational. Iran has been asked by the international financial watchdog, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), to amend its legal safeguards against money laundering (AML) and financial support for terrorism (CFT), as a precondition to preserve normal banking ties with the world.

So far, the Iranian government has not fully met FATF's requirements. Tehran seems to be signaling that it won't enact legislation to comply with FATF requirements until Europe allows trade.

After Iran ignored a FATF deadline in February, the U.S.-led agency extended the deadline to June 2019.

Mandelker in her testimony mentioned Iran's reluctance to adopt the FATF requirements, telling the subcommittee, "we have engaged extensively with European countries on the significant risks of launching a special purpose vehicle for a country that has repeatedly failed to adopt international AML/CFT safeguards."

Iranian critics of the FATF say membership in the task force could pose security risks to the country and entail new sanctions on Tehran. -