

**Gunman Kills Three in Dutch Tram**

UTRECHT, Netherlands (Reuters) -- A gunman shot dead three people and wounded five on a tram in the Dutch city of Utrecht on Monday and police said they were hunting for a 37-year-old Turkish man after an apparent terrorist attack.

Dutch authorities raised the terrorism threat in Utrecht province to its highest level, schools were told to shut their doors and paramilitary police increased security at airports and other vital infrastructure and also at mosques.

# Kayhan International



**350 Civilians Killed in Two Yemeni Provinces**

CAIRO (AP) -- An international charity says fighting in two Yemeni provinces has killed at least 350 civilians in the past three months. The Norwegian Refugee Council said Monday that civilian deaths have doubled in Hajjah and Taiz provinces, even as casualties in the flashpoint city of Hudaydah were down since a shaky ceasefire came into effect there in December. Muhammad Abdi, NRC director in Yemen, says "fighting is intensifying in other parts of the country with a devastating impact on civilians," citing 164 people killed in Hajjah and 184 in Taiz.

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**Viewpoint**

**Landmark Military Meet of Iran, Iraq, Syria Against Terrorism & Foreign Troops**

**Iranian Drama Wins Sofia Film Festival Award**



**Iran Runner-Up at 2019 UWW Freestyle World Cup**



**Iraqi Kurds Secretly Selling Oil to Zionist Regime at Discount Prices**



## Birth in the Holy Ka'ba & Happy New Year

By: Seyyed Ali Shahbaz

*"Have they not regarded how Allah originates the creation? Then He will bring it back. That is indeed easy for Allah. Say, 'Travel over the land and then observe how He has originated the creation.' Then Allah shall bring about the genesis of the Hereafter. Indeed Allah has power over all things."* (Holy Qur'an 29:19-20)

The words of God Almighty are the Ultimate Truth which humanity and science are gradually beginning to discover, while the true believers in the light of the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) and the Infallible Imams of his Blessed Household, have long known that the transient world of nature and its various phenomena, have nothing to do with the mythology of the warped minds, but guide us towards the everlasting life of the Hereafter.

We are on the threshold of the blessed birthday of the only person that was born in the holy Ka'ba -- the holiest spot on Planet Earth -- and who, as the Divinely-Designated Heir of the Seal of Messengers, presented to the world the finest example of the government of social justice.

Since the auspicious 13<sup>th</sup> of Rajab has coincided this year with the Vernal Equinox or Nowrouz (New Year Day), as it is called in Iran and the world of Persianate culture, it would not be out of context to mention a few milestones from the life of the One and Only Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS), that are associated with the first day of spring.

The year 1398 solar hijri, dated like its lunar counterpart from the Prophet's auspicious migration (Hijra) from Mecca to Medina, starts in Iran in the early hours of Thursday, March 21, exactly at 01:28:27 sharp (21:58:27 GMT, March 20), with the overwhelming majority of the people ushering in the New Year amidst supplications to God Almighty at the mausoleums of the Ahl al-Bayt, especially in the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in Mashhad, in the holy shrine of his sister Hazrat Ma'sumah (SA) in Qom, and the Jamkaran Mosque which is associated with the Lord of the Age, Imam Mahdi (may God hasten his reappearance to establish the global government of peace, prosperity and justice)

Here is a famous statement attributed to Imam Ja'far as-Sadeq (AS), the 6<sup>th</sup> Infallible Heir of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) on the Spring Equinox:

*"The sun attained its brightness, the wind started to blow, the Ark of Prophet Noah (AS) stopped at Mount Joudi and was saved from drowning; Prophet Abraham (AS) broke the idols of his community; Archangel Gabriel brought the first revelation to our Prophet (Muhammad - SAWA); the Prophet lifted Imam Ali (AS) on his shoulders to enable him to topple the idols from atop the Ka'ba; and (years later) the Prophet proclaimed Imam Ali (AS) as his (divinely-designated) vicegerent at Ghadeer-Khom (on 18<sup>th</sup> Zilhijja 10 AH by the command of Almighty Allah)."*

According to chroniclers, the auspicious event of Ghadeer in Arabia occurred on the Spring Equinox (Nowrouz of the Iranians). Historical accounts also confirm that twenty-five years later in 36 AH, following the killing of Othman bin Affan, when Imam Ali (AS) reluctantly took up the reins of political power on the pleas of the Muslim masses, it was the 18<sup>th</sup> of Zilhijja and incidentally the Day of Nowrouz.

In view of these facts, here is a glimpse of the morally upright politics for the sake of social justice of the Leader of the Pious, during his four-and-a-half year rule as political head of the vast Islamic realm, which today covers some twenty countries, stretching from North Africa to Central Asia.

Politicians, especially in today's world, are mostly dishonest, corrupt, and self-serving, and love wealth and power. They do anything to get into office, and once they are in office, they do anything to hold on to power. In order to get into office, politicians make all sorts of promises, most of which they fail to keep. Thus, for many people, politics is synonymous with lies, treachery, broken promises, corruption and nepotism. An honest politician who doesn't want to line his own pockets, and is not after wealth, high office, and power, is almost unheard of in today's world, and was certainly very rare indeed throughout history. Has there ever been such a politician?

The answer is yes. He was Imam Ali, whose main concern as caliph was social justice -- making sure that everyone received his fair share of Bayt al-Maal or the public treasury, and making sure that no one's rights were ignored or denied.

Indeed, Imam Ali (AS) accepted the caliphate in order to establish justice throughout the Islamic realm. He believed that the ruler of the land plays a huge role in determining the fate of the society over which he rules. According to him, a ruler or governor not only manages the economy, the social affairs, the security and prosperity of the people he rules, but he also has a very significant effect on the conduct of society, the social norms, and the way society behaves. The politics of the Commander of the Faithful were a world apart from either western or eastern politics, or the dubious political theories of today. In actual fact, the politics of Imam Ali (AS) are based on monotheism, the Qur'anic teachings and the needs of mankind. His politics were inextricably linked to the genuine precepts of Islam in conformity to the nature of mankind and the needs of the society. The Imam was very concerned about all sections of society, but he took a special interest in making sure that the less-well-off and the poor were looked after, and had a decent life, on the basis of honesty, piety and human dignity. Imam Ali (AS) showed that breaking a promise, uttering lies, and resorting to deceit for worldly gains, are grave sins. He always kept his promises and honoured his pledges throughout his blessed life. The importance he gives to this subject is evident in part of Sermon 41 of the book, Nahj al-Balagha:

*"O' people! Surely fulfillment of pledge is the twin of truth. I do not know a better shield (against the assaults of sin) than it. One who realises the reality of return (to the next world) never betrays. We are in a period when most of the people regard betrayal as wisdom. In these days the ignorant call it excellence of cunning. What is the matter with them? Allah may destroy them. One who has been through thick and thin of life finds the excuses to be preventing him from orders and prohibitions of Allah but he disregards them despite capability."*

To end this brief column, here is another famous saying from the 6<sup>th</sup> Imam on the Spring Equinox, followed by the famous supplication in Arabic which is recited throughout Iran on the start of Nowrouz:

*"Today is the day on which God made a pact with His servants to pray to Him not to follow polytheism but to follow the Prophets and the Ahl al-Bayt. On this day the last Imam, the Awaited Mahdi (AS) is expected to reappear..."*

*"Ya Moqallab al-qolub wa'l-Absaar; (O Rotator of hearts and eyes).  
"Ya Modabber al-layl wa'n-nahaar; (O Regulator of the day and night),  
"Ya Mohawwel al-howl wa'l-ahwaal; (O Transformer of state and situations)  
"Hawwil halana ila ahsan il-haal. (Turn our state into the best of conditions).*

# President: Iran to Take Legal Action Against U.S.



President Hassan Rouhani addresses the nation at his last cabinet meeting before the new Persian year in Tehran, March 18, 2019.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Monday that the government would file a legal case in Iran against U.S. officials who imposed sanctions on the country as a precursor to action in international courts.

Rouhani said in a speech broadcast live on state television that U.S. sanctions had created difficulties including a weaker rial currency that has fed into higher inflation.

The United States reimposed sanctions on Tehran after U.S. President Donald Trump chose last May to abandon Iran's 2015 nuclear accord, negotiated with five other world powers.

Rouhani said he had ordered the ministries of foreign affairs and justice "to file a legal case in Iranian courts against those in America who designed and imposed sanctions on Iran". "These sanctions are crime against humanity," he

added. If the Iranian court finds against the U.S. officials, Iran will pursue the case in international courts of justice, the president said.

Iranian complaints about sanctions in the international courts have already succeeded. In October, judges at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered the United States to ensure sanctions do not affect humanitarian aid or civil aviation safety.

"The Americans have only one goal: they want to come back to Iran and rule the nation again," Rouhani said, reiterating Tehran's view that U.S. sanctions are aimed at overthrowing the government and ushering in one more aligned with U.S. policies.

Rouhani said the government had managed to "put a brake on the fall of rial" but that balance has not yet returned to the foreign currency market.

The rial was trading at 131,500 per U.S. dollar on Monday on the unofficial market, almost three times weaker than a year ago, but off record lows around 190,000 hit in late September.

Iranian central bank governor Abdolnaser Hemmati also accused Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and other U.S. officials on Monday of waging a "psychological war" to stir panic in the currency market.

Hemmati was quoted as saying by state media that "the central bank is in full control of the market".

The U.S. sanctions permit trade in humanitarian goods such as food and pharmaceuticals but measures imposed on banks, and trade restrictions, could make such items more expensive as well as more difficult to pay for.

Rouhani urged Iranians to put a curse on the United States, the occupying

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**Iran, Iraq Reiterate Support for Syrian Gov't**

## Syria Vows to Retake U.S.-Occupied Areas

DEMASCUS (Dispatches) -- The Syrian government said on Monday areas held by the U.S.-backed SDF militants would be brought back under its control through military force or the kind of "reconciliation agreements".

"The only card remaining in the hands of the Americans and their allies is the SDF, and it will be dealt with through the two methods used by the Syrian state: national reconciliation or the liberation of the areas that they control through force," Syrian Defense Minister General Ali Abdullah Ayoub said.

"The Americans must leave and will leave," he said.

Large areas of Syria have been brought back under government control through "reconciliation agreements" that have typically been concluded after the military defeat of foreign-backed militants.

On Sunday, the Wall Street Journal said the U.S. plans to keep about 1,000 troops in Syria, despite an earlier announce-

ment by President Donald Trump to completely withdraw them from the Arab country.

The reversal came after talks with Turkey as well as U.S.-backed Kurdish forces and European allies failed to produce an agreement on a "safe zone" in northeast Syria where terrorists are based in their last bastion, it said.

Citing American officials, the Journal on Sunday said the U.S. now plans to keep working with Kurdish militants in Syria, despite Turkish threats to launch an offensive against them. The proposal, the report said, may keep up to 1,000 U.S. forces spread across Syria.

Trump announced his decision to withdraw all 2,000 U.S. troops from northeastern Syria on December 19. The decision shocked allies and top U.S. officials who see the withdrawal a victory for the Syrian government.

The pullout was initially supposed

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## New York Times Exposes MBS Death Squad

NEW YORK (Middle East Eye) -- A covert Saudi death squad that Middle East Eye exposed in October has been involved in the detention and abuse of about a dozen women's rights activists who were detained last spring and summer, according to a U.S. newspaper.

MEE revealed last year that the Firqat el-Nemr, or Tiger Squad, had been involved in the surveillance, kidnapping, detention, torture and murder of Saudi citizens - including the journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

The squad operated under the guidance and supervision of Mohammed bin Salman, the Saudi crown prince, who the CIA believes ordered the murder of Khashoggi last year.

According to the New York

Times, U.S. officials who have read classified intelligence reports say the Tiger Squad, which they refer to as the Saudi Rapid Intervention Group (SRIG), was involved in at least a dozen operations to silence dissenters, starting in 2017.

The NYT said the SRIG sometimes operated in palaces belonging to Mohammed bin Salman, often referred to as MBS, and his father, King Salman.

The targets included the women's rights activists who were arrested last May in the weeks before a ban on women driving cars in the kingdom was lifted.

Loujain al-Hathloul, who had been jailed for trying to drive her car into the kingdom from the United Arab Emirates, Eman al-Nafjan,

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## Holiday Notice

We hope our readers a happy Nowruz. Our next issue will return to newsstands on April 6.