

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – Mireille Girard, the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) representative in Lebanon, said Monday that Lebanon has become much weaker after hosting a big number of Syrian refugees despite the support of the international community, local media reported.

"The Lebanese economy was greatly impacted by the crisis and there is a feeling that Lebanon is on the verge of collapse. Any country facing such a big crisis will normally suffer a lot," Girard was quoted as saying by Elnashra, an online independent newspaper. Girard's remarks came during a conference held in Beirut to discuss the return of refugees and their situation in Lebanon.

Minds get tired like bodies. When you feel that your mind is tired, then invigorate it with sober advice.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

Iraqi Kurds Secretly Selling Oil to Zionist Regime at Discount Prices



Iraqi lawmakers are angry over reports about Kurdistan region's rising oil exports to the Israeli-occupied territories.

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – The Iraqi Kurdistan is secretly selling oil to the Zionist regime at heavily discounted prices, London-based Al-Araby Al-Jadeed newspaper and other local news outlets say.

The report has cited the trade as one of the reasons why the semi-autonomous region is dragging its feet about reaching an oil export agreement with the central government in Baghdad.

The Zionist regime is buying sig-

nificant amounts of Iraqi oil from certain parties and "mafias" in the Kurdistan region for prices as low as \$16 or \$17 dollars, Al-Araby Al-Jadeed said.

The oil is produced in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah and then moved into Turkey's Mersin and Ceyhan ports through the small Iraqi border town of Zakho. From there, it is loaded onto tankers that take it to the occupying regime's largest port of Ashdod.

British daily the Financial Times reported last August that Israel had obtained 75 percent of its oil supplies from the Iraqi Kurdistan, with more than a third of those exports going through the Ceyhan port.

Kurdistan leaders have been reluctant to engage in dialogue with Baghdad in order to resolve outstanding issues about oil flows out of the region.

In late February, Iraq's Minister

of Oil Thamer al-Ghadhban said the central government had yet to receive its share of oil produced from Kurdistan fields.

"Iraq's State Organization for Marketing of Oil (SOMO) has not yet received its 250,000 barrels share of crude oil from Kurdistan oil fields in the framework of Iraq's 2019 federal budget," Ghadhban told state media al-Iraqiyah.

It was reported in November that both sides were close to securing a deal to restart oil exports from the disputed territory of Kirkuk as a result of U.S. pressure to ramp up production after imposing sanctions on Iran's oil industry.

U.S. President Donald Trump has pledged to drive down Iran's oil exports to "zero" and the Baghdad-Kurdistan deal would purportedly add up to 400,000 of barrels of oil a day to international supplies in order to ease price rises after possible drop in Iranian sales.

The Kurdish oil trade with the Zionist regime runs against Iraqi laws that have declared any ties or contributions to the regime as punishable by death.

An unnamed Iraqi official told Al-Araby Al-Jadeed that various political factions had asked Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi to discuss the issue with Kurdish officials and find a way to end the oil smuggling business.

UN Rights Expert: Zionist Regime Depriving Palestinians of Clean Water



In this file picture, Palestinian children fill their bottles with water from a public tap in the Gaza Strip.

GENEVA (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime is depriving millions of Palestinians of access to a regular supply of clean water while stripping their land of minerals "in an apparent act of pillage", a United Nations human rights investigator said on Monday.

Michael Lynk, UN special rapporteur on human rights in the Palestinian territories, said that the Zionist regime "continues full-steam with settlement expansion" in the West Bank, which the United Nations and many countries deem illegal. There are some 20-25,000 new settlers a year, he said.

He was addressing the UN Human Rights Council, whose debate the Zionist regime's delegation boycotted due to what it considers a deep bias against it. "In his latest farcical report, Mr. Lynk stoops to a new low and (accuses) the Jewish State of stealing," the regime's mission in Geneva said in a statement to Reuters. It accused Lynk of being a "known Palestinian advocate".

"In Gaza, the collapse of the coastal aquifer, the only natural source of drinking water in the Strip and now almost entirely unfit for human consumption, is contributing to a significant health crisis among the two million Palestinians living there," the UN of-

ficial pointed out.

Despite the withdrawal of Israeli settlers and troops from Gaza in 2005, Tel Aviv has maintained a "hermetic seal of air, sea and land blockade" around the coastal enclave, Lynk said.

"For nearly five million Palestinians living under occupation, the degradation of their water supply, the exploitation of their natural resources and the defacing of their environment are symptomatic of the lack of any meaningful control they have over their daily lives," he noted.

Lynk went on to say that Israeli quarry companies extracted some 17 million tonnes of stone each year, "notwithstanding strict prohibitions in international law against a military power economically exploiting an occupied territory."

"The Dead Sea and its plentiful natural resources, part of, which lies within the occupied Palestinian territory, is off-limits to any Palestinian development while Israeli companies are permitted to harvest the minerals in an apparent act of pillage," he said.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian ambassador to the UN in Geneva, Ibrahim Khraishi, urged Israel to put an end to "the theft of Palestinian property."

Girl Killed in Landmine Blast in Southern Yemen

ADEN (Dispatches) – A landmine explosion killed a child and seriously injured another in the southern province of Lahj on Sunday, a government official told Xinhua.

The landmine exploded when the two children passed on a dirt road in the village of Shuayb of Lahj Province which is controlled by the Saudi-backed Yemeni mercenaries, the source said on condition of anonymity.

The killed girl is identified as Ghaida Mahboob while the injured one is named Omemah Saif, the Lahj-based source added.

According to the source, the incident is the fifth of its kind in

Lahj this year, with high civilian casualties.

Landmines and explosive devices have been claiming civilian lives in Yemen.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched the war on Yemen in March 2015 with the goal of bringing a former regime that had been submissive to Riyadh back to power.

Sudan has contributed forces to the invading coalition.

A number of Western countries — the U.S. and Britain in particular — supply that coalition with advanced weapons and military equipment as well as logistical and intelligence as-

sistance.

Thousands of Yemeni civilians have been killed, while thousands more have been injured.

Much of the country's infrastructure has also been destroyed, and a Saudi-led blockade has deprived most of the Yemeni population of clean water, food, and proper healthcare.

In the latest development, Yemeni forces killed nearly 40 Saudi and Sudanese soldiers during two separate operations in Saudi Arabia's southwestern border region, in retaliation for the ongoing Saudi-led military campaign against Yemen.

Brigadier General Yahya Saree, the spokesman for Yemeni

Armed Forces, said on Sunday that at least 11 Saudi soldiers and 26 Sudanese troops had been killed in Saudi Arabia's provinces of Jizan and Najran over the past hours, Yemen's Arabic-language al-Masirah reported.

The Yemeni forces targeted military positions across the region following the gathering and analysis of intelligence, he added.

Saree also said Saudi-paid militiamen suffered heavy losses when Yemeni army soldiers and allied fighters from Popular Committees repelled their attacks in some parts of Hudaydah and al-Rabuah provinces.

New Zealand Mosque Gunman Visited Israeli-Occupied Territories in 2016

AL-QUDS (Dispatches) – The main suspect in New Zealand's mosque attacks made a brief visit to the Israeli-occupied territories in late 2016, Zionist regime officials say.

Brenton Tarrant, an Australian national, entered the occupied territories in October 2016 on a three-month tourist visa and stayed for nine days, an official with the regime's Population and Immigration Authority told Reuters.

Tarrant is the suspected gunman in Friday's attacks in the city of Christchurch in which 50 people were killed in New Zealand's worst peacetime mass shooting.

The official said there were no further details available on what Tarrant, 28, did during his stay in the occupied territories. The Australian embassy and New Zealand consulate in the occupied territories did not immediately respond

to requests for comment.

Also in late 2016, Tarrant visited Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia, where he stopped by historic battle sites, before traveling in Western Europe in 2017.

He returned to the Balkans in November 2018 to tour historic sites of Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary.

Iraqi PM Vows No Return to War Policies

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi says his country won't return to war policies as the friend to all regional countries and an advocate of peace.

Abdul Mahdi made the comments during a meeting with Qatari Minister of Commerce and Industry Ali bin Ahmed al-Kuwari and his accompanying delegation in the capital Baghdad, according to a statement by Abdul Mahdi's media office.

"Iraq is a peace element that would serve the region and will not return to the policies of destructive wars," the statement quoted Abdul Mahdi as saying.

"Our interests are with our neighbors and we have a strong will to open and cooperate with Qatar in all fields, and to exchange interests in the economic, trade and investment fields," the prime minister added.

For his part, al-Kuwari said

Qatar is determined to increase cooperation with Iraq and expand relations in economic, trade, construction and investment.

The Qatari minister also expressed his country's desire to sign a free trade agreement with Iraq to exchange, encourage and protect investments between the two countries.

Earlier in the day, al-Kuwari, heading a delegation of more than 30 businessmen and investors, arrived in Baghdad with the aim of boosting bilateral relations, particularly in the economic and investment sectors.

The visit of the Qatari delegation to Iraq comes just days after the visit of a Saudi economic delegation, which aimed at activating relations on the strategic level and opening new horizons for cooperation in politics, economy, trade and investment.