

# Saudi Body Appears to Retract Call to End Gender Segregation

RIYADH (Dispatches) – A Saudi body seems to have backtracked on a new initiative calling to end prayer-time store closures and gender segregation in public places - potentially divisive reforms for the deeply conservative kingdom.

Arabic-language newspaper Okaz reported that the Quality of Life program to improve life in Saudi Arabia had cited both practices as requiring “immediate change” in order to increase the public’s participation in its activities and boost investor confidence.

The article, published on Friday, was later removed. Reuters saw a copy of the document it cited, but a different version posted on an official website did not mention gender segregation or store closures among needed reforms. No timeframe was specified.

Loai Bafaqeeh, chief executive of the Quality of Life program, refused to comment on the apparent discrepancy.

“We are looking into all things that relate to the citizen and resident, including things that involve improving the quality of life, such as families entering sports stadiums and women



An Artist paints a mural portrait of King Salman bin Abdulaziz (R) and his son Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on the outskirts of Riyadh on February 17, 2018.

driving,” he told Reuters by phone on Saturday.

Saudi Arabia has for decades imposed strict social rules. Much of that is now changing under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman who curbed the powers of the religious police in 2016 as part

of ambitious social and economic reforms that saw cinemas reopen last month after a nearly 40-year ban.

The kingdom, which is set to allow women to drive this summer but still requires them to have a male guardian, does not have an

all-encompassing codified legal code.

The religious police still patrol some public spaces, but no longer harass people for being on the streets during prayer time or enter private establishments to enforce gender segregation.

## President ...

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“We want to preserve our peaceful nuclear technology for electricity, medicine, agriculture and health... and we do not seek to threaten the world or the region,” Rouhani said.

As regards Iran’s role in the region, Rouhani said, Iran wants to talk to the rest of the world about restoring security to the Middle East.

“We are negotiating with Turkey and Russia about Syria. We are negotiating with different countries about Yemen, but we must tell the world that we will fight terrorism in every part of the region,” he said.

“We will not allow you to create a Daesh in this area every day and clash with the regional nations,” Rouhani said, addressing the U.S. and its allies.

“We want peace and stability for the region. We tell the world we do not favor wars and tensions, but we are determined in defending our interests and we will stand against any conspiracy,” he added.

## North ...

(Continued From Page One)

“The U.S. is deliberately provoking the DPRK at the time when the situation on the Korean Peninsula is moving toward peace and reconciliation,” the spokesman was quoted as saying. DPRK is short for the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the North’s formal name.

Kim and Trump are expected to meet later this month or in early June.

Trump has indicated the date and place have been chosen and said he believes the Demilitarized Zone that divides the Koreas might be a good venue. Singapore was also believed to be a potential site.

Sunday’s comments were among the very few the North has made since Trump agreed in March to the meeting.

The spokesman warned the U.S. not to interpret Pyongyang’s willingness to talk as a sign of weakness. He also criticized Washington for its ongoing “pressure and military threats” and its position that such pressure won’t be eased until North Korea gives up its nuclear weapons completely.

Before Trump meets Kim, Washington is hoping to gain the release of three Korean-Americans accused of anti-state activities. Trump hinted the release of Kim Dong Chul, Kim Hak Song and Tony Kim was in the offing.

There was no sign of an imminent release on Sunday, though the men had reportedly been moved to the capital.

The White House, meanwhile, has announced a separate meeting between Trump and Moon at the White House on May 22 to “continue their close coordination on developments regarding the Korean Peninsula.”

## U.S. ...

(Continued From Page One)

Russia has increased its naval patrols in the Baltic Sea, the North Atlantic and the Arctic, NATO officials say, although the size of its navy is smaller now than during the Cold War era.

Speaking before of a group of American diplomats at the State Department, Pompeo outlined his vision for U.S. foreign policy at a time of “many challenges.”

“These times are turbulent. The demands are for strong leadership. It is essential that our team does that, and counter the threats that we face with courage and strength,” he said.

## Tehran ...

(Continued From Page 2)

The MKO has a dark history of assassinations and bombings against the Iranian government and nation. It notoriously sided with former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein in his eight-year war against Iran in the 1980s.

The group has been behind most of the terrorist attacks which have claimed the lives of nearly 17,000 Iranians since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979.

Initially designed as a terrorist organization by Europe and the U.S., the group has established close links with Western political parties.

In recent years, several media reports have emerged about top political figures in the U.S. and Europe receiving money from the MKO to speak favorably of the terrorist group.

# Turkey’s Main Opposition Candidate Demands More Media Coverage



Turkey’s main opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP) leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu (L) listens as Muharrem Ince addresses a party meeting on May 4, 2018 in Ankara during which Ince was named as CHP candidate to run in the June 24 presidential elections.

ANKARA (Dispatches) – The presidential candidate for Turkey’s main opposition has hit out at a lack of mainstream media coverage for opposition parties and candidates before elections in June.

Muharrem Ince, the main opposition Republican People’s Party’s (CHP) candidate to challenge

President Tayyip Erdogan in the June 24 snap elections, said a “media embargo” had been placed on opposition parties upon Erdogan’s request.

“Television channels, which even broadcast the AK Party’s provincial congresses live, did not show our rally in Yalova live. We will go on by

fighting with this media structure,” Ince said on Twitter on Sunday.

“If the media embargo ordered by the Palace continues, we will hold our rallies in front of TV stations,” he said, referring to the 1,000 room presidential palace built by Erdogan in Ankara.

Four Turkish opposition parties have announced the forming of a coalition in an attempt to challenge Erdogan party in the upcoming national election.

The main opposition Republican People’s Party’s (CHP) Bulent Tezcan made the announcement of the formation of the “nation alliance” on Saturday.

Tezcan party is teaming-up with the nationalist Good Party, the Felicity Party and the Democrat Party in an attempt to weaken the Erdogan’s Justice and Development Party (AKP).

All four parties have put forward their own candidates for the presidential elections to run against Erdogan, but will run as an alliance for the parliamentary election, which is to be held on the same day as the presidential elections.

Tezcan added that the parliamentary candidates from the Democrat Party would run under the Good Party. The small party also announced that it would back the Good Party leader and presidential candidate Meral Aksener.

# Zionist PM to Meet Russia’s Putin

AL-QUD (Dispatches) – Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will meet Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday in Moscow to discuss regional issues, the Zionist premier’s office said in a statement.

The Zionist regime has been lobbying world powers to “fix or nix” a 2015 nuclear deal with Iran as a May 12 deadline set by President

Donald Trump approaches.

The Zionist regime is also concerned that Iran is establishing a military presence in Syria.

Netanyahu and Putin spoke by phone on Monday after the Zionist prime minister presented what he said were Iran’s secret nuclear files which document it having worked toward developing atomic weapons in the past.

U.S. and Zionist officials claimed the information showed Iran had lied about its past work to develop nuclear arms but intelligence experts said there was no smoking gun showing that Tehran had violated the nuclear deal under which it curbed its atomic program in return for relief from economic sanctions.

Trump has given Britain, France

and Germany a May 12 deadline to fix what he views as the “deal’s flaws” or he will reimpose U.S. sanctions.

Moscow has repeatedly said it wants the Iran nuclear deal left intact. Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on Friday Russia would deem any changes to the deal to be unacceptable.

# Seven Indian Engineers Kidnapped in Afghanistan

KABUL (Reuters) – Seven Indian engineers and an Afghan national working for a power plant in northern Baghlan province of Afghanistan were kidnapped on Sunday, officials said.

Zabihullah Shuja, spokesman for Baghlan police, said the engineers were traveling to a government-run power station in a minibus when unknown gunmen abducted them

and their Afghan driver.

Two officials at the Indian embassy in Kabul confirmed the kidnapping of the engineers, all working for the Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS) that operates power generating stations.

A senior Indian embassy official said over 150 Indian engineers and technical experts are currently

working across Afghanistan on large infrastructure projects.

“We are working out ways to ensure the release of our engineers,” an official said.

It is not known who is responsible for the kidnapping or whether a ransom has been sought for their release.

Kidnapping of locals for extortions

are common in Afghanistan. Rampant poverty and rising unemployment has worsened the situation.

In 2016, an Indian aid worker was kidnapped in Kabul. She was released after 40 days.

The Indian government regularly issues a security alert for Indians residing in Afghanistan and traveling to the war-torn country.