

ISTANBUL (Reuters) – A Turkish court sentenced mining company executives to up to 22 years in jail on Wednesday over their role in a coal mine disaster in western Turkey four years ago in which 301 people were killed, a court ruling showed. In what was Turkey's worst industrial disaster, the victims died as fire swept through a mine in the town of Soma, 480 km (300 miles) south of Istanbul in May 2014, fueling anger in a nation with one of the world's worst workplace safety records. The mining company's general manager and technical manager were both sentenced to 22 years in jail. Two other company officials were jailed for nearly 19 years and the chairman was sentenced to 15 years in prison, the ruling seen by Reuters said.

One who imagines himself to be all-knowing will surely suffer on account of his ignorance.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

Syria Widens Assault in Southwest, Hits Daesh Pocket

AMMAN (Dispatches) – The Syrian government widened its offensive to recover the southwest on Wednesday, extending it to an enclave held by Daesh-affiliated terrorists as Russian warplanes targeted the area, a war monitor said.

The bombardment targeted the Yarmouk Basin, which borders the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights and Jordan, and which is held by the Daesh-affiliated Khalid Ibn al-Walid Army.

President Bashar al-Assad is seeking to recover the entire southwestern corner of Syria in an offensive that got underway last month and has so far recovered swathes of territory from rebels fighting under the so-called Free Syrian Army (FSA) banner.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Wednesday's air strikes marked the first Russian strikes on the Yarmouk basin area in the war.

Assad has so far recovered swathes of Dara'a province in the southwest from FSA militants, many of whom have been forced into surrender agreements me-



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diated by Russian officers. The United States, which once armed the southern FSA militants, told them at the start of the attack not to expect its intervention.

The Syrian government earlier this week took control of a strategically vital strip of the border from FSA militants in Dara'a province, denying them any access to the Jordanian frontier that was once an opposition lifeline.

In another development, the Zionist regime launched a Patriot interceptor missile on Wednesday at a drone spotted approaching from

Syria, the second such incident in as many months, the regime's military said.

The incident set off air sirens on the Golan Heights and the nearby Jordanian border, the military statement said.

The Zionist regime has been on high alert as Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's forces advance against rebels near the Golan and Jordan.

Meanwhile, the Syrian army has reportedly seized two sophisticated French-made anti-tank weapon systems in the southern Province

of Dara'a.

The arms, seized in Jadal village, were referred to as 112-mm APILAS (Armor-Piercing Infantry Light Arm System), online military magazine Defence Blog reported on Tuesday.

"Local media have released imagery showing two captured APILAS anti-tank weapon systems developed in France by GIAT Industries," it said.

Currently known as Nexter Systems, GIAT Industries is a French government-owned arms manufacturer.

France is accused of backing anti-Damascus militancy since 2011.

The use of the APILAS anti-tank weapon system had also been spotted in Syria before, the magazine wrote, saying "as early as 2015, a couple of systems of this type were seized from Free Syrian Army (FSA) militants."

After liberating Dara'a, Damascus hopes to free its neighboring provinces of Quneitra and Suwaida of terrorist presence, too. The three provinces form the Arab country's southern tip near the border with Jordan.

10 Killed in Militant Attack in Afghan City of Jalalabad



Afghan security forces arrive at the site of an attack in Jalalabad city, eastern Afghanistan.

JALALABAD (Dispatches) – Gunmen attacked an education department office in the eastern Afghan city of Jalalabad on Wednesday and held out against security forces for some four hours before the assault ended with at least 10 people killed, officials said.

As the attack ended, the provincial governor's spokesman

Attullah Khogyani said the casualties included 10 people wounded.

He said there were three attackers, two of whom detonated bomb vests, while the third was shot by security forces.

Some local officials said the situation had been brought under control as of 1 p.m. local time. But it was also unclear

whether all assailants had been neutralized.

There were no immediate claims of responsibility for the attack. But the area is widely regarded as a stronghold for the Daesh terrorist group, and past terror attacks in Nangarhar Province have been claimed by the outfit.

The attack came just a day after 10 people were killed and four more wounded when a bomber detonated his explosives near Jalalabad's 6th police district, local news outlets reported, citing a statement issued by media office of the provincial government.

Local officials said it was not yet clear how many gunmen were involved in the Wednesday morning attack and how many people might have been trapped or held hostage in the building following the attack.

Security forces, meanwhile, have cordoned off the area.

It was the third major attack in less than two weeks in Jalalabad, the main city of Nangarhar province, following a blast that killed a group of Sikhs on July 1 and a second that killed at least 12 people on Tuesday.

Since late last year, Daesh terrorists, who have been flushed out of Syria and Iraq, have taken advantage of the persisting chaos in Afghanistan and established a foothold in the country's eastern and northern regions.

According to Afghan intelligence reports, Daesh is present in nine provinces, from Nangarhar and Kunar in the east to Jawzjan, Faryab, and Badakhshan in the north, and Ghor in central west.

Last November, former Afghan President Hamid Karzai also declared that the US was colluding with Daesh terrorists across Afghanistan and allowing the Takfiri group to flourish in the war-ravaged country.

18 PKK Militants 'Neutralized' in Southern Turkey

ANKARA (Daily Sabah) – Joint operations carried out by Turkish police and gendarmerie "neutralized" 18 terrorists in southern Turkey – 11 in Osmaniye province, three in Diyarbakir and four in Şırnak – the Ministry of Interior announced Wednesday.

Turkish authorities often use the word "neutralized" to refer to militants who are killed, captured or have surrendered.

A statement by the ministry said counter-terror operations in the region are ongoing.

Meanwhile, Turkish airstrikes "destroyed" 28 PKK terror targets in northern Iraq, the General Staff said Wednesday.

The military said fighter jets hit targets on Tuesday in northern Iraq's Qandil, Metina, Zap, Avasin Basyan, Hakurk and Gara regions, destroying shelters and depots that were used by PKK.

Turkish officials have recently suggested that the Mount Qandil region -- where the terrorist group has its headquarters -- may be the target of a future operation.

In its more than 30-year terror campaign against Turkey, the PKK -- listed as a terrorist organization by Turkey, the U.S. and the EU -- has been responsible for the death of some 40,000 people, including women and children.

UN:

Zionist Regime Razed 197 Palestinian Structures in 2018



Palestinian activists and residents of Khan al-Ahmar block the path of Zionist troops in this file photo.

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime's authorities demolished 197 Palestinian structures in West Bank during the first half of 2018 as the Tel Aviv regime presses ahead with its land expropriation policies in the occupied territories, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) says

The world body, in a statement released on Wednesday, announced that eight homes, 10 livelihood-related structures and four retaining walls or fences were destroyed last month.

It added that Zionist troops and the so-called administrative control department demolished a structure in an area of the southern West Bank city of al-Khalil, located 30 kilometers (19 miles) south of al-Quds, in June.

Additionally, a residential apartment was demolished on punitive

grounds in Eastern Barta'a town, displacing a family of three.

The OCHA further highlighted that demolitions within the first half of the current year in East al-Quds mark an increase of 12 percent compared to the same period in the preceding year.

The occupied territories have witnessed new tensions ever since U.S. President Donald Trump on December 6, 2017 announced Washington's recognition of al-Quds as the regime's "capital" and said the U.S. would move its embassy to the city.

The dramatic decision triggered demonstrations in the occupied Palestinian territories and elsewhere in the world.

The status of al-Quds is the thorniest issue in the decades-long Zionist-Palestinian conflict.

The Palestinians see East al-Quds as the capital of their future state.

'Yemen's Hudaydah Residents in Critical Condition'

SANAA (Press TV) – The UN health agency has warned about the "critical" conditions of civilians in Yemen's Hudaydah, which has been subject to a Saudi-led offensive for weeks, saying military operations in the key port city threaten over 70 percent of the population who are in need of relief aid.

The World Health Organization (WHO) said that the health conditions in Hudaydah were some of "the most dire in the country" even before the assault began last month on the Red Sea port, a lifeline for the majority of Yemen's population.

Hudaydah, the WHO said, had registered the highest incidences of suspected cholera cases - around 14 percent of those reported nationwide - with 209 suspected cases of diphtheria and 252 of measles.

"The intensification of fighting in Hudaydah endangered not only those directly affected but also the 70 percent of the population who depended on vital supplies, including healthcare supplies, that flowed through Hudaydah port," WHO spokesman Tarik Jasarevic said. "The port constituted a lifeline not only for the city but for all the northern governorates."

Backed by Saudi-led airstrikes, Emirati forces and militants loyal to Yemen's former president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, launched

the Hudaydah offensive on June 13 despite international warnings that it would compound the impoverished nation's humanitarian crisis.

The Saudi-led coalition, which has been waging a war against Yemen since early 2015, claims that the Houthis are using Hudaydah for weapons delivery, an allegation rejected by the fighters.

The coalition of aggressors has, however, failed to make any major gains in the face of stiff resistance from Houthi fighters and their allied forces.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Jasarevic said that a total of 46 deaths and 328 injured were recorded in Hudaydah between June 13 and July 7.

Despite the decline in fighting, he added, the conditions for civilians remain "critical."

He also warned that continued fighting "will likely further exacerbate the situation" in the port city, which has already been grappling with one of the highest malnutrition rates in Yemen.

Separately, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said Tuesday that 1,316 Yemeni children were killed and maimed last year, 51 percent of them in Saudi airstrikes.

It also estimated that 842 boys had been recruited by various sides to the Yemeni conflict.