

UN:

35,000 Families Displaced by Saudi Attacks on Hudaydah

NEW YORK (Press TV) – Saudi Arabia's ground and air attacks on Yemen's Hudaydah have displaced some 35,000 families so far, says the UN.

"As of 13 July, approximately 35,000 displaced households have been verified, and 20,000 of them have received RRM assistance," said the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), referring to Rapid Response Mechanism assistance.

It added that the Saudi coalition's continued airstrikes and artillery attacks in the Tuhayata and Zabid districts are still displacing families and disrupting basic services.

OCHA noted that the situation in the port city has slightly improved and that some people have returned to their homes.

"More civilians are moving within the city compared to previous weeks; shops and bakeries have reopened and water supply has improved following repairs to the



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main water pipeline," it said. "However, roads leading to airport, sea port and the Sana'a-Hudaydah road remain blocked by sand and concrete barriers," it added.

The UN health agency has also warned over the "critical" conditions of civilians in Hudaydah,

stressing that military operations in the key port city threaten over 70 percent of the population who are in need of relief aid.

Earlier in the day, local tribes gathered in the capital Sana'a to voice their support for the Yemeni army and allied fighters from the Houthi movement in their fight for

Hudaydah.

Cars, loaded with ammunition, on Sunday carried fighters to Sana'a where tribal heads pledged to take their battle to Hudaydah to confront the Saudi push for the Red Sea port, a lifeline for the majority of Yemen's population.

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.

Yemen Fires Ballistic Missile at Terrorists in West

SANAA (Dispatches) – Yemeni army forces fired a domestically-manufactured ballistic missile at a gathering of Saudi-backed terrorists near the western coast city of Hudaydah.

The ballistic missile hit a military camp belonging to the terrorists in the western coast front, inflicting major losses on them, a military source, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Saba news agency.

Since June 13, the Saudi-led coalition and its mercenaries have launched massive attacks to bring Hudaydah under their control but have failed to achieve their objective due to Yemenis'

resistance.

The United States, Britain and France have backed the coalition in the Yemen conflict and keep providing weapons to both Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

While the Yemeni army and popular committees are fighting off the assailants and countering attacks on residential areas, humanitarian organizations have warned that the Saudi-led coalition's Hudaydah operation threatens to cut off essential supplies to millions of Yemeni people. More than 70 percent of Yemen's imports pass through Hudaydah's docks.

Meanwhile, media reports said on Tuesday that the UAE military forces stationed in southern Yemen have been abducting and raping young Yemeni women and girls.

The Arabic-language al-Morssel news website reported that two Yemeni girls, both under 20 years of age, have been kidnapped and raped by the security forces of the UAE in the past week.

The parents of the two girls have received life threats from the UAE troops to keep mum about the incident.

According to the report, the UAE forces lead a gang of the

loyal security forces who abduct young Yemeni girls and women and surrender them to the UAE military officers "for partying".

Other Arab media outlets have been releasing similar reports in the last few months.

Relevant reports said last month that hundreds of detainees had been sexually abused at a jail in Southern Yemen believed to be run by the United Arab Emirates, according to several witnesses.

Fifteen officers who arrived at Beir Ahmed prison in Aden hid their faces behind their head-dresses, but their accents were clearly identifiable as from the UAE, Associated Press reported.

Hamas Warns of Consequences of Zionist Gaza Siege

GAZA STRIP (Dispatches) – The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas has warned the Zionist regime of "dangerous consequences" as the regime tightens its inhumane siege on the Gaza Strip by blocking fuel shipments into the coastal enclave.

On July 9, the regime imposed sanctions on Gaza in what it described as a crackdown against Hamas. The regime closed the Kerem Shalom crossing, Gaza's main conduit for trade, to most merchandise, except for fuel, food and medicine.

The occupying regime's military said the closure would continue as long as Palestinian protesters send kites and balloons loaded with flammable material into the occupied lands.

On Monday night, the Zionist war minister's office announced in a statement that Avigdor Lieberman had decided to halt fuel transfer into Gaza from Tuesday morning until Sunday in response to what it called "terror attempts" by Hamas, which runs Gaza.

"Lieberman, in consultation with the chief of staff, has decided to close the Kerem Shalom crossing to imports of oil and gas until this Sunday," the statement read. "The crossing will continue to transfer food and medi-

cine [shipments] that are individually approved."

The statement also noted that the Zionist regime had reduced the area where Gaza fishermen were allowed to fish, from six nautical miles to three.

In response, Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum condemned the Zionist regime's closure of the Kerem Shalom crossing as a crime against Palestinian people.

"The Israeli occupation's closure of the Kerem Shalom crossing and depriving Gaza from the most simple necessities of life is a crime against humanity that will be added to its list of crimes at the expense of the Palestinian people including those living in the Strip," he said in a statement.

"These vengeful measures reflect the degree of the oppression and the ugliness of the crime that Gaza is facing, that will have dangerous consequences for which the occupation will bear full responsibility," he added.

According to latest reports, the number of trucks, which carried food into the Gaza Strip last week, was the lowest in recent months.

Separately, Egyptian officials manning the Rafah border crossing with Gaza said it would not be operating Tuesday in both directions, without providing reasons. The crossing has been open since late May.

U.S. General:

Remarks on Afghan Talks 'Mischaracterized'

KABUL (Reuters) – The NATO-led Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan on Tuesday rejected reports its commander General John Nicholson had said the United States was ready to join direct negotiations with the Taliban, saying his comments were "mischaracterized".

In a statement, it referred to reports on Monday in which Nicholson reiterated comments by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on the possibility of talks with the Taliban involving the United States.

"The United States is not a substitute for the Afghan people or the Afghan government," Nicholson said in a statement.

"My reaffirmation of Secretary Pompeo's

statement in which he said peace talks would include a discussion of international forces and that the United States is ready to work with the Taliban, the Afghan government and the Afghan people toward lasting peace was mischaracterized," he said.

The Taliban have rejected talks with the government of President Ashraf Ghani, which they see as illegitimate and instead insisted they would only talk with the United States.

In his comments on Monday, Nicholson said the United States recognized it had an important role to play in the peace process.

"Our Secretary of State, Mr. (Mike) Pom-

peo, has said that we, the United States, are ready to talk to the Taliban and discuss the role of international forces," he said. "We hope that they realize this and that this will help to move forward the peace process."

The remarks come amid growing speculation about moves to open talks with the Taliban following an unprecedented three-day ceasefire during last month's Eid holiday.

Last month, Pompeo said the United States was ready to "support, facilitate and participate" in discussions with the Taliban over the role of international forces in Afghanistan but that the peace process would be Afghan-led.

Iran...

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from trade with the Islamic Republic.

While discussions with the related central banks have started, they have not bought into the option yet, the Journal reported.

Under pressure from the United States, the European Investment Bank (EIB) has already balked at the EU proposal to do business in Iran.

EU diplomats, officials and sources at the bank have said the plan would imperil EIB's multi-billion-dollar funding, the balk of which is rooted in the U.S.

Washington is also reportedly lobbying European banks in back channels to object to the plan, warning them of consequences if they invest in Iran.

On Monday, Mogherini implicitly admitted U.S. pressures, saying European governments had an uphill task to persuade firms to trade with Iran.

"It is a difficult exercise, because the weight of the U.S. in the global economy and the financial system is obviously relevant," she said.

Germany, France and the UK, as well as their EU counterparts reportedly lodged requests with the U.S. administration last month, seeking exemptions from sanctions for trade with Iran.

Washington, however, rebuffed the high-level European plea, the Financial Times reported on Monday.

A number of European companies such as French oil group Total and carmaker PSA have already announced their plans to wind down business in Iran.

Mogherini said while the Europeans "will continue to do all we can to try and prevent this deal from being dismantled," she was not sure the "efforts are going to be enough."

"It is predictable that many multinational corporations and large European and non-European banks may not be willing to continue economic cooperation with Iran under US pressure and threat," chairman of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture Massoud Khansari said.

Last year, Iran signed several credit agreements worth \$30 billion with Danish, Italian, Austrian, Chinese, and Korean banks, which are now exposed to U.S. sanctions, he said in remarks published Tuesday.

Residents...

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to boost cooperation with the U.S. military in Syria, following talks between U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The ministry said in a statement Tuesday that it's ready for "practical implementation" of agreements reached by Trump and Putin.

It said Russia's military leadership is ready to augment contacts with U.S. counterparts on "cooperation in Syria" and extending the START arms control treaty, but gave no details.

Putin said Russia and the U.S. reached common ground on Syria at Monday's talks but gave few details.

The U.S. and Russia have backed opposite sides of Syria's war, but U.S. and Russian officials are reportedly working toward an eventual deal on the balance of regional power in post-war Syria.

Minister...

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Iraq has been importing electricity from Iran for many years after their power infrastructure was destroyed by decades of war and blockade following the U.S. invasion.

The country needs more than 23,000 megawatts of additional electricity to meet domestic demand.

Iran cut off electricity supplies to Iraq two weeks ago as rolling blackouts and water shortages in the southern Khuzestan province in the face of sizzling temperatures touched off a series of protests.

Consumers across Iran have cranked up their air conditioners amid a brutal heat wave which has seen the mercury hit 50 degrees Celsius in many cities.

According to officials, power consumption record has been shattered three times so far this year, with the grid's all-time peak of 57,097 MW set last week.

Meteorologists forecast another heat wave in the coming weeks, urging consumers to economize.

Banks and other public institutions in Tehran and some other cities have been ordered to open two hours earlier. The regional electric company has also announced rationed outages of up to two hours for all districts in Tehran and some other cities.