

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – Iraq launched an air strike on a gathering of Daesh terrorists in neighboring Syria, killing members of the terrorist group who planned cross-border attacks, its military has said. F-16 fighter jets bombed and destroyed an “operations room” where the terrorists were meeting. Daesh, which once occupied a third of Iraq’s territory, has been largely defeated in the country but still poses a threat along its border with Syria. “According to intelligence, those terrorists who were killed were planning criminal operations using suicide vests and intended to target innocents in the next few days inside Iraq,” the military said in a statement.

There is no greater wealth than wisdom, no greater poverty than ignorance; no greater heritage than culture and no greater support than consultation.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

Zionist Regime’s New Construction Plan ‘Declaration of War’



Picture taken on July 24, 2018 shows a view of ongoing construction work at Ramat Shlomo, a settlement in the occupied holy city of al-Quds’ eastern part.

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – The Palestinian Authority has reacted strongly to a recent approval by the Zionist regime’s authorities to build 20,000 new settler units in the occupied holy city of al-Quds. PA spokesman Yousef al-Mahmoud called the move “an Israeli declaration of war against oc-

cupied Jerusalem (al-Quds), its Arabic, Palestinian history, and culture,” the Palestinian-run International Middle East Media Center (IMEMC) reported. The violation came as part of the regime’s constant hostility against the city since 1967, when it occupied the Palestinian territory of

the West Bank, including East al-Quds, said al-Mahmoud. “Israel is constantly trying to alter the geography and demography of the city to claim it as the eternal and unified capital,” the official added. Further illegal construction by the Zionist regime “will lead the region

and the world into more conflicts and violence,” he said, stressing that the occupying regime and the United States were responsible for any deterioration that could result from further expansion of settlements.

Mahmoud said the regime’s violations were being carried out with the “full support” of the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump.

Under the new settlement plan for al-Quds which was announced on Wednesday, around 12,600 new settler units and an additional 8,000 units will be built as part of “urban renewal initiative” in existing structures. The plan would also include industrial areas and hotels.

Palestinians want the city’s eastern part as the capital of their future state.

Last December, however, U.S. President Trump said Washington endorsed the regime’s claim to the entire city as the regime’s “capital.”

The United Nations General Assembly overwhelmingly voted later in the month in favor of a resolution that called on the U.S. to withdraw the controversial recognition.

The U.S. defiantly moved its embassy from Tel Aviv to the city in May.

Russia: Syria Base Attacked by ‘Sophisticated’ Drones



This July 12, 2018 file photo shows a militant walking near what purports to be the remains of a drone downed a day earlier in southwestern Syria.

MOSCOW (Press TV) – Russia says the drones used to attack its Hmeimim airbase in Syria are too sophisticated to have been assembled by terrorists.

Russia’s Defense Ministry Spokesman Major General Igor Konashenkov said in a briefing the drones that were downed by Hmeimim air defense assets appeared primitive but had a range of 100 kilometers and used advanced technologies.

Konashenkov said such drones, which were supported by explosive devices, navigation gadgets and control systems, could not have been assembled by terrorists “without any outside help”.

The official added that experts who had analyzed the downed UAVs had reached the conclusion that the assembling work had been based on “a clear instruction developed by specialists.” He added that the terrorists had

also launched the attacks based on a clear line of expert directions.

Konashenkov further added that the Russian air defense assets had over the past month successfully downed 45 drones during attacks on Hmeimim airbase located in Syria’s Latakia.

The drone attacks had all been launched by Idlib-based militants, he said, adding that the number of such attacks has recently increased.

The Hmeimim airbase is the hub of Russian operations in the Arab country and the largest base in Syria run by foreign troops.

Idlib, a governorate on the Turkish border, is one of the last strongholds still held by foreign-backed militants in Syria. A series of observation posts have been set up by Turkey in Idlib as part of a deal between Damascus, Tehran, Ankara, and Moscow to reduce fighting between militants and the Syrian government in de-escalation zones.

UN: Yemeni Ex-Gov’t, Houthis Invited to Talks

SANAA (Dispatches) – The United Nations has invited Yemen’s former government and the Houthi Ansarullah movement to hold talks in Geneva next month on ways to resolve the country’s crisis, a UN spokeswoman says.

“I can confirm that the Office of the Special Envoy sent out invitations,” UN spokeswoman Alessandra Vellucci told reporters on Friday.

The UN special envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, said earlier this month that the consultations are due to begin in Geneva on September 6 on a framework for peace talks and confidence-building measures.

The UN, he said, is primarily trying to reach an agreement between the Saudi-backed side and

Yemen’s ruling Houthis “on the issues essential to ending the war and on a national unity government in which everyone participates.”

Meanwhile, thousands of civilians are trapped in Yemen’s Hudaydah as Saudi Arabia and allies step up their attacks to capture the port city from the Houthi Ansarullah movement.

Backed by air power from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, militia groups loyal to Yemen’s ousted former president, Abd Rbbuh Mansour Hadi, have been pushing to seize the Duraihami district, which lies adjacent to southern Hudaydah.

The Saudi-led front mounted a new offensive in Duraihami on Tuesday, two days after laying

a siege to the heavily-populated area.

Local reports said the area is being constantly targeted by Saudi-led airstrikes, rocket attacks, artillery and an ongoing ground offensive.

The Houthi fighters say the Saudi-led coalition has been indiscriminately targeting civilians.

Human Rights Watch says the Saudi-led coalition has conducted scores of “indiscriminate and disproportionate air strikes” hitting civilian objects that have killed thousands of civilians “in violation of the laws of war”, with munitions that the US, United Kingdom, and others still supply.

In one of their most abhorrent attacks, Saudi warplanes targeted a school bus in Yemen’s north-

western province of Sa’ada last week, leaving 40 children and 11 adults dead.

According to data from an independent monitoring group, the Yemen Data Project, this was just one of 55 instances of attacks on Yemeni civilian vehicles this year.

The group also suggests that Saudis are targeting civilians on purpose as an extensive analysis of over 18,000 airstrikes from March 2015 to April 2016 shows that almost a third (31%) of the targets were non-military – civilians or civilian infrastructure.

This is while only 36 percent of the attacks targeted military sites. The rest of the attacks were classified as having an unknown target.

UN: Bahrain Jailing of Leading Campaigner Rajab Unlawful

GENEVA (Dispatches) – Bahrain’s detention of activist Nabeel Rajab is unlawful and violates his right to freedom of expression, UN human rights experts have found, calling on the kingdom to immediately release him with compensation.

Bahrain, where a Sunni Muslim royal family rules over a Shia-majority population, has cracked down on perceived threats since Arab Spring protests in 2011, were quashed with the help of Persian Gulf Arab neighbors.

Rajab was sentenced to five years in prison in February for criticizing Saudi Arabia’s air strikes in Yemen and writing tweets accusing Bahrain’s prison authorities of torture.

A leading figure in the pro-democracy protests, he

was already serving a two-year term over a news interview in which he said Bahrain tortured political prisoners.

In a formal opinion posted overnight, the UN panel of five independent experts said that provisions of Bahrain’s penal code were “so vague and overly broad” that people were punished for merely exercising their rights under international law.

“The Working Group therefore considers that Mr. Rajab’s deprivation of liberty is arbitrary,” it said, adding that: “no such trial” should have taken place.

Rajab’s political views were “clearly at the centre of the present case” and the government attitude had been “discriminatory”, it said. “He has been the target of persecution, including deprivation of lib-

erty, for many years and there is no other explanation for this except that he is exercising his right to express such views and convictions.”

Rajab, held since June 2016, should be released immediately and compensated, it said.

The Manama regime, in a statement, rejected the findings of the UN experts, saying Rajab’s trials had been independent and transparent.

Separately, Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei of the London-based Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy, in a statement said, “The UN has now unequivocally found that Bahrain is arbitrarily detaining Nabeel Rajab in violation of numerous international legal standards – these vital findings cannot be ignored.”

UNRWA: Palestinian Schools to Open on Time Despite U.S. Cut

GAZA (Dispatches) – Schools teaching half a million Palestinian refugees will reopen across the Middle East as planned later this month, a UN agency says, despite funding cuts by the United States.

The opening of the schools on Aug. 29 had been in doubt after the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) said it lacked funds to pay the 22,000 teachers in its educational network in the Gaza Strip, the occupied West Bank and East al-Quds, and Jordan and Syria.

UNRWA said students will return to its 711 schools on time though it still did not have enough money to fund them for a full school year.

UN officials said the agency needed more than \$200 million from other contributors to cover its deficit after the U.S. aid cuts.

U.S. President Donald Trump said in January he would scale back aid to the Palestinians unless they cooperated with his plans to revive the so-called “peacemaking” with the Zionist regime. Those peace efforts stalled in 2014.

At a specially convened session of the UNRWA Advisory Commission in Amman, Com-

missioner-General Pierre Krahenbuhl said that since the beginning of the year the agency had received \$238 million in additional contributions after a funding drive but was not “out of the woods”.

“We currently only have funding to run the agency’s services until the end of September,” Krahenbuhl said in a statement. “We need a further \$217 million to ensure that our schools not only open but can be run until the end of the year.”

UNRWA was founded in 1949 after the first Arab-Israeli war, which led to 700,000 Palestinians being forced to leave their homes or flee. It helps around 5 million Palestinian refugees, a figure that includes descendants of those displaced by the fighting.

In January, Trump tweeted “we pay the Palestinians HUNDRED OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS a year and get no appreciation or respect. They don’t even want to negotiate a long overdue peace treaty with Israel.” The U.S. State Department has said the agency needed to make unspecified reforms.

The Zionist regime has accused UNRWA of favoring Palestinians and welcomed Trump’s move.