

Iraqi Parties Announce Alliance to Form Gov't

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – Iraqi political leaders have agreed on the formation of a cross-sectarian “core” political alliance that would begin the formation of a new government.

Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, incumbent Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, Shia cleric Ammar al-Hakim and representatives of the mostly Sunni al-Wataniya political coalition met in the Babylon Hotel in Baghdad to push forward talks on forming a new government, following the long-delayed ratification of the 12 May election results.

In a statement released following the discussions, the group announced their intention to build an alliance that was “cross-sectarian and refuses partisanship in all of its forms”.

“In a national Iraqi decision springing from the interest of our country, and responding to the demands of the people, we agreed today to form the core of an alliance that will seek to form the parliamentary bloc that can form the government,” it read.

It added that the new group would “seek to seriously and actively contribute to forming a government that works... to provide services, rebuilds, return IDPs [internally displaced persons], fights corruption, and holds the corrupt accountable”.

The creation of a new government in Iraq has been delayed since May, when the results of the parliamentary elections were fiercely disputed, leading to a manual recount of votes. No government could be formed until the result was ratified.



Iraqi Shia Muslim leader and head of Hikma party Ammar al-Hakim, left, and Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr meet in the Iraqi holy city of Najaf

Sadr’s coalition, Sa’iroun, held 54 seats in the 329-seat parliament. Abadi, whose coalition, the Victory Alliance, had won only 42 seats to become third, formed an alliance with Sa’iroun in the aftermath of the election.

Iraqi lawmakers now have three months to form the new government. To do that, they need to hold their first session and elect a new speaker. From that point, they will have one month to elect a president.

The president will ask the largest bloc in the parliament to elect a prime minister who will form a government.

This is the fourth poll of its kind since the 2003 U.S. invasion, which led to a sharp rise in sectarian tensions and ensuing terror-related violence in Iraq.

The next prime minister will face the huge task of rebuilding a country shattered by the war against Daesh and the U.S. invasion.

After U.S.

UK Stops Funding Terrorists Amid Syria Victory

DAMASCUS (Press TV) – After the U.S., the UK is to stop funding terrorists in Syria amid a growing government push to retake the last terrorist-held areas in the Arab country.

“As the situation on the ground in some regions has become increasingly difficult, we have reduced support for some of our non-humanitarian programming,” a UK government spokeswoman said, quoted by Reuters.

The British daily The Guardian reported Monday that the funding for the so-called Free Syria Police (FSP) is set to come to an end in

September. The force was set up after 2011, when foreign-backed militancy started ravaging Syria.

Syria, which has recently liberated the southern provinces of Dara’a, Sweida, and Quneitra, is turning its focus to the last stronghold of terrorists in the northwestern Idlib Province.

The Guardian said Britain’s decision to end support for terrorists shows the country “has accepted that the Syrian opposition, which it has backed since the early days of the civil war in 2012 to 2013, is facing imminent defeat.”

The decision came after a BBC

Panorama investigation broadcast last December revealed that the British cash used to form a “police force” in militant-held areas in Syria was being diverted to extremist groups.

According to the report, “officers” from the force had been caught cooperating with terrorist groups.

The program said “police officers” in Idlib had to be approved by al-Nusra Front, al-Qaeda’s Syria offshoot, and that similar terrorists in the neighboring Aleppo Province had been forced to hand over cash to Nour al-Din

al-Zinki, another terrorist group.

Earlier this year, the U.S. told the so-called Free Syrian Army militant group that they could no longer rely on Washington’s support which had been trickling since 2011 as the army launched an operation which resulted in the liberation of the southern provinces.

On Friday, it was reported that Washington had also cut its \$230 million funding for the so-called Syria stabilization projects, citing increased contributions from the Saudi Arabian regime and other allies.

Withheld by Zionist Regime for Years

Palestinians Receive Tonnes of Letters

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – Palestinian people living in the Israeli-occupied West Bank are set to receive a special delivery of some 10.5 tonnes of letters and postal packages that the Tel Aviv regime had kept for up to eight years.

“We received tons of Palestinian mails because of the intolerance of the occupation authorities who refused to bring it through Jordan and as it is stamped for the Palestinian postal destination,” Hussein Sawafta, the director general of the Palestinian post service, told reporters.

Postal workers in the West Bank city of Ariha sorted through scores of mail sacks that Zionist authorities had finally allowed to enter the city through the border with Jordan.

The Palestinian ministry of telecommunications posted photos of the letters on its Facebook page, showing large piles of letter bags in a room as employees worked on them.

Ramadan Ghazawy, a Palestinian postal official, said even after many years of delay, the Israeli side had done a poor job of classifying the mail.

“After eight years it didn’t come categorized as it is supposed to be, with lists and categorized. We got it all mixed.”

Family photographs and personal letters as well as medicine were among the delayed packages. Other shipments also included children’s

toys to wheelchairs for the disabled.

The letters were kept in Jordan since 2010 because the regime refused to let any sort of direct transfer to the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, Palestinian officials said.

Any letter or package that is addressed for the West Bank and Gaza Strip, undergoes the regime’s inspection first.

Zionist authorities claimed that this was not going to happen in future as moves were under way to implement a 2016 agreement that allows direct international mail flow to the West Bank.

However, Palestinian Telecommunications Minister Allam Mousa said the regime was delaying the agreement’s implementation and still blocked mail directly through Jordan, and therefore violating international resolutions.

“A team was formed from across the city (Ariha) to deliver (the mail) to the people as soon as possible,” said Sawafta.

Ghazawy said delivering the mails was going to be difficult and even impossible in some cases due to the damage the boxes and the envelopes had sustained over these years, while the addresses on others had worn off.

“There are toys for kids. Maybe they were one year old when those gifts were sent. Now they are eight,” Ghazawy said.

Europe ...

(Continued From Page One)

Iran’s oil exports, the European Union has taken steps to counter the renewed U.S. sanctions, including forbidding EU citizens from complying with them or related court rulings.

The United States will impose tougher sanctions on Iran in November which will target Iran’s oil sale and banking sector.

Qasemi said the U.S. has launched a massive campaign against it, sending teams to different countries around the world to disrupt Tehran’s trade ties, but the effort will fail. “America is not in a position to do whatever it wants. It’s not time to dictate and write from dictation,” he said.

The Trump administration has reportedly formed a new “elite team of foreign affairs specialists” led by the State Department to coordinate and promote its pressure policies against Iran across the government and with other nations.

Brian Hook, the department’s current director of policy planning, will lead the team as the administration’s special representative to the Iran Action Group, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced Thursday.

“The United States is trying, in a massive psychological warfare and all-out attempt, to create restrictions on Iran’s economic cooperation by sending delegations and forming such groups and contacts with countries,” Qasemi said.

“These actions will not come to fruition and can fail. Although there will be sanctions, we can get through this stage,” he added.

The spokesman played down the significance of the action group, saying it was nothing new and Iran did not take it very seriously.

“A major part of it is in accordance with psychological warfare and pressure on countries to not cooperate with Iran. We are observing this group and its actions, and to what extent it is pursuing its activities,” Qasemi said.

“This measure, like previous ones, will go nowhere and will be neutralized with the resistance of the Iranian nation and the strategies which exist,” he added without elaboration. While Iran has complaints about the practical measures being taken by the Europeans to ensure trade with the Islamic Republic, it is still optimistic, Qasemi said. “We have not lost our hope,” he added.

Nevertheless, “we rely initially on Iran’s national capabilities and economic capacities and then we have an eye on external and outside cooperation” to overcome new U.S. sanctions, the spokesman said.

Washington has said the pressures are aimed at forcing Tehran to bring a sweeping change to its nuclear program and foreign policy, including its military engagement in Syria. Advisory Presence in Syria to Continue

An unnamed U.S. official has been quoted as saying that the U.S. and Russia agreed in principle that the Iranians should exit Syria but Russia saw that as a tough task. Qasemi played down talks between National Security Advisor John Bolton and his Russian counterpart Nikolai Patrushev later this week in Geneva, which are reportedly to touch on Iran’s role in Syria.

He said there is a lot of contradictory news about the issue which should not given much attention, adding there is also a “serious bid to undermine relations between Iran and Russia which have had good cooperation on many fronts, including in Syria.” Having said that, “I reiterate that we have a military advisory presence in Syria at the invitation of its government and as long as the Syrian government demands, we will be present there - both now and during the reconstruction phase,” Qasemi said.

“We will not allow others to interfere in our relations with neighboring and periphery countries through a propaganda campaign, and this is what the occupation regime and some others are pursuing,” the spokesman added.

Iran is planning to host a tripartite summit on Syria in early September with the presidents of Russia and Turkey.

“It will be an important summit,” Qasemi said, adding he would announce the exact date of the summit soon.

Gunfire...

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Erdogan appealed to Turks’ religious and patriotic feelings ahead of a major Muslim holiday, promising they would not be brought “to their knees” by an economic crisis that has battered the lira currency.

“The attack on our economy has absolutely no difference from attacks on our call to prayer and our flag. The goal is the same. The goal is to bring Turkey and the Turkish people to their knees - to take it prisoner,” Erdogan said in the televised address. “Those who think they can make Turkey give in with the exchange rate will soon see that they are mistaken.”

Much of the recent tension has centered around a U.S. evangelical Christian pastor, Andrew Brunson, who has been detained in Turkey on terrorism charges.

On Friday, a Turkish court rejected Brunson’s appeal for release, drawing a stiff rebuke from Trump, who said the United States would not take the detention of the pastor “sitting down”. In response to Brunson’s case, Trump - who counts evangelical Christians among his core supporters - has said he would double previously announced tariffs on Turkish steel and aluminum imports.

The German finance minister said on Monday the Turkish currency crisis posed an additional risk to Germany’s economy. However, German Chancellor Angela Merkel told her Christian Democrats at a meeting that she saw no urgent need to offer financial aid to Turkey to ease the crisis, the party’s general secretary said.

Eid al-Adha...

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Since Arafa is the day for attaining the proper cognition of the One and Only Creator, as food for thought, here is a passage from the famous supplication of this day from the Prophet’s grandson, the Martyr of Karbala, Imam Husain (AS):

“You are verily Originator and Reproducer (of the creation) and worthy of all praise and full of all glory. Holy be Your Names as Your bounties are so immeasurable. Which of Your favors, O my God, can I count in numbers and examples? Or which of Your gifts can I thank properly?”

“And I bear witness, O my God, with my true belief, and the fortitude of the determinations of my conviction and the purity of my open belief in Your Oneness and the essence of the secret of my conscience, and the ties of the canals of the light of my sight, and the lines of my forehead and the hallows of the courses of my breath, and the (nasal) cavities of my nose, and the courses of the meatus of my hearing, and whatever my two lips hide and cover up, and the motions of the vocalization of my tongue, and the socket of the palate of my mouth and jaw, and the matrices of my dents, and the tasting of my food and my drink, and the carrier of my skill, and the tube of the tissues of my neck and what is included by the cloak of my chest, and the carriers of the cord of my aorta, and the cords of the pericardium of my heart, and the pieces of the retinues of my liver, and that which is included by the cartilages of my ribs, and the cavities of my joints, and the interacting of my organisms, and the extremes of my fingertips, and my flesh, and my blood, and my hair, and my skin, and my nerve, and my sinews, and my bones, and my brain, and my veins, and all of my organs, and that which was pieced together during the days of my suckling, and whatever of my body that the ground carries, and my sleeping, and my wakefulness, and my motionlessness, and the movements of my bowing and prostration; (by all that I bear witness) that if I try my best and strive throughout all ages and all times, to thank properly only one of Your favors, I will not be able to do that except through Your favor, which also requires me to thank You for it once again with new thanking and with praise that is newly acquired.”

Happy Eid al-Adha for the Muslim World, but with thoughts for the martyrs of the massive mismanagement at Mena, as well as tributes to the “Zibhin Azeem” or the Great Sacrifice, that is, the martyrdom of Imam Husain (AS) and dear and near ones in Karbala, through whom God Almighty ransomed Prophet Ishmael after having tested the firm faith of Prophet Abraham.

U.S.-Led Coalition Service Member Killed In Iraq Crash

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – A member of the U.S.-led military purportedly fighting Daesh terrorists was killed and several others were injured when their helicopter crashed on a counter-terrorism mission in Iraq, the coalition said.

There were no indications that the crash was caused by hostile fire and the incident was under

investigation, the statement added.

“All personnel were recovered by Coalition forces immediately following the incident, and three were evacuated for further treatment,” said the statement.

Colonel Sean Ryan, a spokesman for the U.S.-led international coalition, said on Twitter the

crash was of a military helicopter.

On March 15, all seven personnel aboard a U.S. military helicopter carrying American service members were killed in a crash in western Iraq.

The United States says it has about 5,200 troops in Iraq that are part of a coalition fighting Daesh terrorists.