

BAGHDAD (Ruply) – A bridge connecting provinces Erbil and Kirkuk in Iraqi Kurdistan has been reopened after being closed for 10 months. The bridge was closed following clashes between Iraqi forces and Kurdish Peshmerga militants. The two checkpoints on the bridge are reportedly controlled by both Iraqi and Peshmerga forces, each side in charge of its own one. Iraqi Commander of Federal Police headquarters Shaker Quinn said that the timing for cargo vehicles to use the road will be set separately from other vehicles.

Wealth converts a strange land into homeland and poverty turns a native place into a strange land.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

Russia:

U.S. Refusal to Rebuild Syria Ploy to Slow Refugee Return



Displaced people who fled the Syrian war sit on their belongings near the Lebanese-Syrian border as they prepare to return to their village of Beit Jinn in Syria, while Lebanese General Security soldiers stand guard, in the southern village of Shebaa, Lebanon, April, 18, 2018.

MOSCOW (Dispatches) – Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Monday a U.S. refusal to take part in the reconstruction of Syria was designed to impede the return of Syrian refugees to the country.

Lavrov said Washington was only interested in rebuilding parts of Syria where the opposition to

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad was active. Lavrov was speaking in Moscow following talks with his Lebanese counterpart Gebran Bassil.

Acting U.S. Assistant Secretary David Satterfield has said the United States and other countries would not contribute to Syria's full reconstruction until there was

a "credible and irreversible" political process underway to end the conflict.

Lavrov said Russia will help Lebanon return refugees to neighboring Syria and called on opposition groups in the terrorist-held Syrian province of Idlib to distance themselves from the Nusra Front group, formerly the local branch of al-

Qaeda.

The province was hit by a wave of air strikes and shelling earlier this month, in a possible prelude to a government offensive to regain control.

"We agreed that Lebanon should not be the subject to foreign interference, a pawn in geopolitical games, or a hostage of the Syrian crisis and its negative consequences such as the problem of Syrian refugees," Lavrov said after talks with his visiting Lebanese counterpart, Gebran Bassil.

According to the UN's refugee agency, nearly 5.5 million Syrians have fled abroad to escape the country's war.

Lebanon hosts more than 1 million Syrian refugees, equal to more than a quarter of its population, and Bassil told reporters Beirut saw no reason for refugees to remain on its territory.

On Idlib, Lavrov said Russia wanted militants to separate themselves from groups Moscow regards as extremists.

Idlib in northern Syria is part of the last significant terrorist-held area in Syria and Assad, who is backed by Moscow, has said his forces will recapture the region.

'UN Responsible for Saudi Aggression on Yemen'



Yemeni scholars and religious figures have strongly denounced a recent deadly airstrike by Saudi warplanes on a bus carrying schoolchildren in the country's northwestern province of Sa'ada, criticizing the silence and inaction of world bodies vis-à-vis the Saudi-led coalition's crimes against Yemenis.

SANAA (Dispatches) – Yemeni scholars and religious figures have strongly denounced a recent deadly airstrike by Saudi warplanes on a bus carrying schoolchildren in the country's northwestern province of Sa'ada, criticizing the silence and inaction of world bodies vis-à-vis the Saudi-led coalition's crimes against Yemenis.

The scholars, in a statement held the United Nations and the UN Security Council responsible for the atrocities of the Saudi-led military alliance against the Yemeni nation. The statement called on all freedom-loving people worldwide, Muslim leaders and clerics in particular, to raise their voices and fulfill their humanitarian and religious duties in the face of the aggressors' heinous criminal acts.

It also urged Yemeni people to stand united, demonstrate resilience and continue to send fighters to battlefronts.

The airstrike on August 9 hit a bus carrying a group of young schoolchildren attending summer classes of the Holy Qur'an from a camp at a busy market area in the Dhahyan district of Sa'ada province, UN spokesman, Farhan Haq, said in a statement.

According to Yemeni medical sources, over 50 people, including 40 children, were killed and 77 injured in the strike.

The United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres has censured the attack, calling for "an independent and prompt investigation" into the incident.

In a latest incident, more than a dozen Yemeni fishermen have lost their lives and several others sustained injuries when Saudi fighter jets targeted their fishing boats off the coast of the western province of Hudaydah as the Riyadh regime continues its atrocious military campaign against its crisis-hit southern neighbor.

Yemeni military sources, speaking on condition of anonymity on Sunday, told Yemen's al-Masirah television network that Saudi warplanes struck two fishing boats in waters off the Seven Brothers Islands, also known as the Sawabi Islands or Seba Islands, in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, killing 13 people and injuring four others.

The sources added that another four Yemeni fishermen remained unaccounted for.

Later in the day, scores of Saudi troops and Saudi-backed Yemeni militiamen loyal to the former president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, were killed and injured as Yemeni army troops, backed by allied fighters from Popular Committees, made territorial advances in the Hayran district of the northern Yemeni province of Hajjah.

Fatah Voices Strong Opposition to Truce With Zionist Regime

RAMALLAH (Dispatches) – Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah party says he is strongly against the Hamas resistance movement's stance on advancing a truce with the Zionist regime.

Fatah spokesman Osama Qawasmi said in a press statement that the truce between Hamas and the Zionist regime comes with a political price, describing Hamas' claims as "nonsense, lies and disinformation that cannot fool anyone."

"The price will be allowing the passage of the American-Zionist Deal of the Century, bashing the Palestine Liberation Organization, turning the division into separation, implementing Israeli schemes aimed at having total hold over Jerusalem and the West Bank, and blocking the possibility of an Israeli withdrawal from the land of the State of Palestine," he stressed.

At the same time, Qawasmi warned that this truce deal

would be "a real threat to the Palestinian national identity."

Egypt and the UN are mediating a long-term cease-fire agreement between Hamas and the Zionist regime.

Last week, three delegations representing Hamas, the left-wing Palestinian parties and senior employees in various ministries in the Gaza Strip headed to Cairo to resume talks, reportedly focusing on the ceasefire deal and the resumption of the national reconciliation deal.

conciliation deal.

The Gaza Strip has been under a tight blockade by the occupying regime since Hamas took control of the territory in 2007.

The blockade has pushed Gaza's 2 million people deeper into poverty with an unprecedented unemployment rate.

In the past nine years, the Zionist regime has launched three major wars on the Gaza Strip that claimed lives of thousands of Palestinians.

Zionist Regime to Construct New Settler Units

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – Zionist regime officials have approved plans for the construction of more than a hundred new settler units in the central part of the occupied West Bank irrespective of the international outcry against the Tel Aviv regime's land expropriation and settlement expansion policies in occupied Palestinian territories.

Hassan Breijieh, a member of the anti-wall and anti-settlements committee in Bethlehem, said the so-called Israeli Civil Administration Higher Planning Council had initially endorsed plans for the building of 40 new housing units in the Efrat settlement, but later increased the number to 106 following protests by the extremist

local settlers.

Breijieh added that Zionist troops had distributed notices among Palestinian landowners, informing them of the plans.

Less than a month before US President Donald Trump took office, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2334, calling on the regime to "immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem" al-Quds.

About 600,000 Zionists live in over 230 illegal settlements built since the 1967 occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East al-Quds.

Palestinians want the West Bank as part of a future independent Palestinian state,

with East Jerusalem al-Quds as its capital.

The last round of Zionist-Palestinian talks collapsed in 2014. Among the major sticking points in those negotiations was the regime's continued settlement expansion on Palestinian territories.

Trump backtracked on Washington's support for a "two-state solution" earlier this year, saying he would support any solution favored by both sides.

"Looking at two-state or one-state, I like the one that both parties like. I'm very happy with the one both parties like. I can live with either one," the U.S. president said during a joint press conference with Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Washington on February 15.