

Rights Groups Challenge UK Arms Sales to Riyadh

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – Human Rights Watch (HRW), Amnesty International and Rights Watch UK have all received permission to participate in a court case that challenges the United Kingdom's right to sell weapons to Saudi Arabia, HRW said in a press release.

"Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and RW UK have received permission to intervene in a court case challenging the United Kingdom's continued sale of arms to Saudi Arabia," the release said.

The case brought by Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) hopes to prove that the UK is breaking its own criteria for exporting weapons, because any arms sent to Saudi Arabia could be used to commit violations of humanitarian law in Yemen, the release noted.

Britain has licensed about \$6.1 billion in U.S. dollars worth of arms sales to Saudi Arabia since 2016, the release continued.

The High Court in London dismissed the case in 2017, but CAAT won the right to appeal and will be heard in an appeals court in April 2019, according to Human Rights Watch.

According to Yemen's Health Ministry, more than 15,000 have died since the onset of the warfare. This is while various reports put the death toll far higher, saying a Saudi-enforced media blackout has prevented proper investigation into the number of fatalities.

British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt has in-



The aftermath of a Saudi-led airstrike in western Yemen as seen on September 16, 2018

dicted his country is pushing for a resolution in the United Nations Security Council that could guarantee the end of the Saudi war in Yemen.

Hunt made a statement on Monday in which he said the Foreign Office (Britain's foreign ministry) was in close consultation with the UN special envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, about the situation in the war-torn country.

The statement did not mention what specific action the UK will take to help end the crisis

in Yemen but reiterated that London will do its best to ensure that a ceasefire could be implemented if the two sides of the conflict agree to end hostilities.

"The action the UK takes forward at the UN Security Council will help towards that goal, ensuring that a full ceasefire, when it comes, is fully implemented," said the statement, adding that the time was right for the Security Council to act to bolster the UN-led process in Yemen.

Iraqi PM Meets UN Envoy to Discuss Gov't Plan, Int'l Support

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi on Monday met with the UN Special Envoy in Iraq Jan Kubis over the ways to implement the government program and assist Iraq.

The discussion covered the "political and security situation, stabilization and reconstruction, as well as the future program of the UN in Iraq," the prime minister's office said in a statement.

Mahdi stressed the international support for Iraq in the coming stage, after the victory over Daesh terrorists in the country, the statement noted.

According to a separate statement by the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq, Kubis discussed "the outlined government program and ways the UN can as-

sist the government of Iraq in its implementation, as well as efforts to advance investment, stabilization, reconstruction, return of IDPs (internally displaced people) and security sector reform."

On Oct. 24, Abdul-Mahdi was sworn in as the new prime minister of Iraq after the parliament passed 14 out of his 22 cabinet members.

The parliament also approved Mahdi's government program, which included strengthening internal and external security through law enforcement, anti-terrorism and efforts to fight corruption.

Abdul-Mahdi is also the temporary acting minister for the security ministries of defense and interior.

Abdul-Mahdi faces the daunting task of rebuilding much of the country after a devastating war against Daesh, as well as solving acute economic problems and power and water shortages.

The premier has detailed his agenda for the next four years in a 122-page document, which lists plans for developing the war-torn country, settling differences with the Kurdistan Regional Government, boosting the economy and reducing poverty.

In terms of security, he said all arms must be in the hands of the state, rejecting "semi-states" within the country. He also vowed his government would resolve electricity problems by the summer of 2019.

Millions of Iraqis voted on May 12 in their first parliamentary election since the defeat of the Daesh terrorist group, but a contentious recount process delayed the announcement of final results until August.

Sadr's Sairoon bloc came first in the polls, while the Fatah Alliance led by Hadi al-Amiri, and Abadi's Nasr finished second and third respectively.

The Iraqi politics has long been vulnerable to the differences lying along the country's major ethnic and sectarian fault lines.

Under a de facto power-sharing agreement, the presidency of Iraq is traditionally held by a Kurdish politician, the PM is a Shia, while the parliament speaker is a Sunni.

Bare-Faced ...

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Rouhani told economists, adding the sanctions were illegal and unfair. "This is an economic war against Iran but... America should learn that it cannot use the language of force against Iran ... We are prepared to resist any pressure," Rouhani said.

Foreign Minister Zarif said Washington had made itself more isolated by pursuing the sanctions.

"U.S. bullying is backfiring... The U.S. — and not Iran — is isolated," Zarif said in a tweet.

The European Union, France, Germany and Britain said they regretted the U.S. decision and would seek to protect European companies doing legitimate business with Tehran.

China, India, South Korea, Japan and Turkey - all top importers of Iranian oil - are among eight countries given temporary exemptions from the sanctions to ensure crude oil prices are not destabilized.

Rouhani said even without the waivers Iran would still be able to sell its oil. Acclaimed British journalist Peter Osborne believes the American strategy is doomed to failure, and will likely end in humiliation for the U.S.

"In the medium term, it will backfire; the U.S. and its allies will lose influence, while Iran will gain confidence and power," he wrote on the website of the Middle East Eye.

"In the worst case scenario, it will result in a war whose consequences will be incalculable," he added.

The holes in Trump's strategy were outlined in an article in the New York Times earlier this week, pointing out that China and India will continue to buy Iranian oil in addition to Turkey and Russia.

Even close U.S. allies, including France and Germany, as well as Britain, have expressed their intention to continue trade with Iran without the use of the dollar.

"All of this means that the Trump administration has made an epic miscalculation," Osborne wrote.

"Trump thinks that he can take the international community with him as he embarks on his economic war against Iran. He can't - and this spells mortal danger for the U.S.," he added.

According to the journalist, Trump is playing for very high stakes and "if he loses, much of the global power of the U.S. will collapse."

Successive U.S. presidents have used the reserve currency status of the U.S. dollar as a weapon to isolate the country's enemies and to enforce its will.

"If Trump fails in his economic war against Iran - and I believe he will - it will signal to the world that the dollar can no longer be used as a foreign policy weapon," Osborne said.

Terrorism...

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systems," Jalali was quoted as saying by the ISNA news agency. He gave no further details.

In 2013, researchers at Symantec Corp uncovered a version of the Stuxnet that was used to attack the Iranian nuclear program in November 2007.

Tehran agreed under a 2015 deal with world powers to curb the program but President Donald Trump pulled the United States out of it in May, with Israel's backing. Washington fully restored sanctions on Tehran on Monday.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei last week called for stepped up efforts to fight enemy "infiltration" in a speech to officials in charge of cyber defense.

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electronic warfare, were the key objectives of the Velayat drills, Sayyari said.

Commenting on the drills' coincidence with the U.S. reimposition of sanctions against the Islamic Republic, Sayyari said the economic pressure is never going to affect Iran's ability to defend itself.

Ever since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, "our country has been subjected to the most severe forms of sanctions... and these sanctions are more prevalent in the military field because the enemy doesn't want the Islamic Republic to stay independent and self-reliant as a country," Sayyari said.

Iranian Armed Forces have reached such levels "on land, in sea and in air," 40 years after the late Imam Khomeini led the revolution to victory and urged self-reliance, the admiral added.

He said Iran's advancements in air defense have turned the country's skies into the safest airspace in the whole world, a point that the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has also acknowledged.

One of the new air defense systems successfully tested on the first day of Velayat exercises was the Third of Khordad missile system, developed by the IRGC Aerospace Force.

Armed with advanced Taer missiles that have a range of 50 kilometers, the system is capable of simultaneously intercepting four targets and firing eight missiles at them.

Another air defense weapon unveiled on Monday was the 35mm Seraj anti-aircraft gun system, which, armed with radar and a new optical target acquisition system, is intended to act as an effective weapon against a wide range of targets particularly drones and other small flying objects.

Iran...

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Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are expected to attend.

The Moscow talks underline the increasingly active role Russia is playing in Afghanistan, decades after Soviet forces withdrew from the country, with business investment plans, diplomatic and cultural outreach and small military support for the central government.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani rejected the invitation on the grounds that talks with the Taliban should be led by the Afghan government. Russia decided to go ahead with the Moscow talks nevertheless, a diplomatic move that has angered Kabul.

A five-member Taliban delegation led by Sher Muhammad Abbas Stanakzai, head of the Taliban's political council in Qatar, will reportedly attend.

Some Taliban said the delegation would raise their demands for a withdrawal of all foreign forces, the release of all prisoners and the lifting of a ban on travel.

Zionist Troops Shoot Palestinian Man

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime's troops have shot and injured a Palestinian man in the southern part of the West Bank as tensions continue in the occupied Palestinian territories as part of the aftermath of U.S. President Donald Trump's recognition of al-Quds as the regime's capital and relocation of the U.S. embassy to the occupied city.

The regime's media outlets asserted that the unidentified knife-wielding Palestinian sought to stab a settler and a Zionist trooper at Elias Junction and near the entrance to the Kiryat Arba settlement in al-Khalil, located 30 kilometers (19 miles) south of al-Quds, on Monday afternoon.

The trooper fired towards the alleged assailant and "neutralized" him, the Israeli military said in a statement.

No Zionist troops or settlers were injured in the attempted attack.

The Palestinian man, who was apparently from the nearby town of Bani Na'im, was transported in a jeep to the Shaare Zedek Medical Center in al-Quds. He will then be taken to custody for questioning.

Four-Month-Old Baby Injured

In another incident, a four-month-old Palestinian infant has been injured after Zionist settlers attacked her parents' car traveling west of the northern occupied West Bank city of Nablus.

According to the Palestinian Ma'an News Agency, the incident took place late on Sunday as Ali Shawahneh, from Kafr Thulth village, east of the northern West Bank district of Qalqilyah, was heading home along with his family when Zionist settlers started hurling rocks and stones at their vehicle passing near the Havat Gilad settlement.

The attack by extremist Jewish settlers prompted Shawahneh to slam on the breaks and suddenly stop, which resulted in his infant daughter's head hitting the glass and her injury.

Reports said an Israeli military vehicle came to the scene and held the family at the location to take their statement on what had happened while the Shawahneh's infant was crying. No ambulance was called to the scene.

meeting with senior British defense official John Lorimer.

Aoun reiterated that Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's claims that Hezbollah was keeping missiles in three different sites near Lebanon's Rafik Hariri International Airport are false.

Aoun said that the increasing accusations of Netanyahu coincide with the regime's continuous violations of Lebanon's airspace.

Zionist warplanes violated Lebanon's airspace again on Monday above Shabaa farms and Golan Heights.

Lebanese President Vows to Preserve National Security, Stability

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – Lebanese President Michel Aoun Monday said that Lebanon is keen on preserving its security and stability facing terrorism, Lebanon's presidency website reported.

"We should always be alert to protect our security and stability," said Aoun during his