

*To refrain from unlawful and impious source of pleasures is an ornament to the poor and to be thankful for the riches granted is the adornment of wealth.*

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

**Turkey Orders Arrest of 219 Soldiers in Gulen Investigation**

ISTANBUL (Reuters) – Turkish prosecutors ordered the detention of 219 soldiers with suspected links to the U.S.-based cleric accused of orchestrating a failed coup in 2016, state-owned Anadolu news agency said on Friday. Police have conducted a steady stream of raids against alleged supporters of the preacher Fethullah Gulen since the coup attempt in July 2016, in which 250 people were killed. Gulen denies involvement. On the orders of the Istanbul chief prosecutor's office, an operation was launched at 01:00 am (2200 GMT) to seize the suspects, all soldiers on active service including four colonels, the Hürriyet newspaper website reported.

**If U.S. Doesn't Remove Kurdish Militia**

## Turkey Threatens to Enter Syria's Manbij



The file photo shows members of the People's Protection Units (YPG), part of the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), in the town of Shadadi, south of the northeastern Syrian city of Hasakah, September 11, 2018.

ANKARA (Dispatches) – Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced on Friday that Ankara was determined to bring peace to the east of the Euphrates in Syria, warning that Turkey would launch an operation against the so-called Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) in the Syrian city of Manbij, in case the U.S. does not remove the Kurdish forces from the region.

Ankara and Washington have been repeatedly clashing on the issue of Kurdish troops in the Syrian conflict. According to the Turkish authorities, YPG is a terrorist organization, linked to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), banned by Ankara, while the American

has side supported Kurdish units that joined the U.S.-backed so-called Syrian Democratic Forces.

The development came after Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu and U.S. State Secretary Mike Pompeo discussed the situation in Syria in a phone conversation on Thursday, a source in the Turkish Foreign Ministry said.

"Today, our minister held phone talks with U.S. State Secretary Mike Pompeo, they discussed the situation in Syria," the source said.

U.S.-Turkish relations have suffered a setback amid Ankara's concerns over U.S. support for the YPG. Ankara has also repeatedly accused Washington

of failing to fulfill its promises regarding the withdrawal of the YPG from Syria's Manbij.

The U.S. military established "observation posts" in northern Syria with the purported aim of preventing clashes between Turkish forces and U.S.-backed Kurdish militants, despite Ankara's strong opposition to the plan.

"At the direction of Secretary (James) Mattis, the U.S. established observation posts in the northeast Syria border region to address the security concerns of our NATO ally Turkey," Department of Defense spokesman Rob Manning said in a press release on Tuesday.

This is while Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar had, during a meeting with

U.S. Special Envoy to Syria James Jeffrey in Ankara, called on Washington to lift the so-called observation posts in northern Syria, along parts of Turkey's border.

Akar also said earlier that Turkey had expressed its concerns about US plans to set up several observation posts in Syria, a move, which according to him, could lead to a perception that Washington is "somehow protecting terrorist YPG [Kurdish People's Protection Units] members."

Cavusoglu this month lambasted as a "big mistake" the U.S. support for the YPG militants in Syria, a thorny issue in ties between the two allies.

The Pentagon's Tuesday release further said that the U.S. military would coordinate with Turkey its security efforts in the border region.

"We take Turkish security concerns seriously and we are committed to coordinating our efforts with Turkey to bring stability to northeastern Syria," Manning said in the press release.

Washington infuriated Ankara by announcing a plan for the formation of a Kurdish militant force in Syria near the Turkish border.

The plan prompted Turkey to launch a cross-border military operation on January 20 inside the Arab country, code-named Operation Olive Branch, with the declared aim of eliminating the YPG militants from northern Syria, particularly the Afrin region.

Turkish troops captured Afrin in March, and threatened to take the battle to nearby Manbij. Ankara and Washington agreed a roadmap on Manbij, which would see the city cleansed of U.S.-backed Kurdish militants.

**Aid Group: Yemeni Mothers Forced to Choose Which Child to Starve**



A Yemeni mother holds her malnourished child as they wait for treatment in a medical center in the village of al-Mutaynah, in Hudaydah province, Yemen. The AFP file photo was taken on November 29, 2018.

LONDON (Dispatches) – Mothers are being forced to leave their children to starve as they face a "catastrophic" shortage of food in war-torn Yemen, a humanitarian group says.

As the warring parties pledged a ceasefire over a key entry port for supplies, Action Against Hunger said many civilians were struggling to survive in a conflict often described as the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

"We are very much aware that the situation right now is catastrophic," Valentina Ferrante, the group's country director for Yemen, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

"If a family does not have the necessary economic resources to feed the entire family then they will select who to feed.

"Sometimes you get up to a point where a mother is literally forced not to feed certain members of the family, most probably the youngest one."

Yemen, one of the poorest Arab countries, is locked in a war that pits Houthi Ansullah fighters against the former government backed by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and the West.

The conflict and ensuing economic collapse have left nearly 16 million people, 53 percent of the population, in urgent need of food aid and famine was a danger if immediate action was not taken, the United Nations said this

month. The warring parties have agreed to cease fighting for the port city of Hudaydah, which is the main entry point for both commercial imports and aid supplies.

Ferrante said the biggest challenge in delivering humanitarian aid was not money but gaining safe access to conflict areas which were being hit by airstrikes.

"We need to pass the message that we are neutral, so we are not involved in politics, we just need to deliver high-quality humanitarian aid interventions," she said.

Aid groups hailed the deal in Sweden as a "landmark first step" towards ending the conflict.

"The agreement from Sweden is incredibly encouraging to all of us who seek an end to the war and suffering in Yemen," said Johan Mooij, Yemen country director for aid agency CARE.

He said 80 percent of Yemen's commercial and humanitarian aid arrives through Hudaydah port.

"Only an end to the war can bring lasting relief to Yemeni people," said Tamer Kirolos of charity Save the Children.

"Until then, the international community must continue to put pressure on all sides to urgently address the humanitarian crisis to avoid a full-blown famine."

**Hariri:**

### Zionist Regime Won't Succeed in New War on Lebanon

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – Lebanese Prime Minister-designate Saad Hariri says the Zionist regime will not succeed in case it opts to launch a new military aggression against his country.

Delivering a speech at the Chatham House think tank in London, Hariri downplayed the possibility of the Zionist regime waging another war on Lebanon, questioning what the regime's military's previous wars had accomplished.

"Did Israeli attacks weaken Hezbollah?" he commented.

The remarks came four days after Hezbollah deputy secretary general said

the Lebanese resistance movement's arms capability has deterred Israel from aggression against Lebanon, stressing that "there is not a point in Israel not exposed to Hezbollah rockets."

"Ever since 2006, Israel has been deterred by the ability of [Hezbollah]," Sheikh Naim Qassem said in an interview with Iranian Arabic-language al-Vefagh newspaper published on December 9, adding that all of Israel, "even Tel Aviv," is subject to Hezbollah's rockets.

Hariri noted that whilst Beirut does not want war, the Tel Aviv regime does not want peace.

"[Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu doesn't want peace. He wants a little piece of Lebanon, a little piece of Jordan and a little of Palestine," the Lebanese premier-designate pointed out.

Hariri said that Lebanon wants peace based on Arab League decisions, "but do they [Israel] know what they want?"

"You open the news and see headlines like, 'Lebanon has tunnels into Israel' and some allegations that it's Hezbollah," he said, referring to a recent operation that the Israeli military has undertaken to block what it claims are tunnels Hezbollah has dug into

occupied territories.

Hariri underscored that the Zionist regime violates Lebanon's sovereignty on a daily basis.

"Have you ever heard of how many sorties into Lebanon or its international waters from Israel? Has anyone? Do you think this is fair?" he questioned.

He said that Israel conducted 150 incursions into Lebanon last month. "Do you think it's fair for our international waters to be penetrated 10 to 20 times a month?"

Hariri concluded that Israel still occupies parts of Lebanon, namely Shebaa Farms.

### Bahrain Courts Give Life Sentence to 2 Anti-Regime Activists

MANAMA (Press TV) – Courts in Bahrain have sentenced two anti-regime protesters to life imprisonment and handed down prison sentences to four others on the ruling Al Khalifah regime presses ahead with its heavy-handed clampdown on political dissidents and pro-democracy campaigners in the Persian Gulf kingdom.

On Thursday, Bahraini judiciary officials sentenced two defendants to life in prison after finding them guilty of "unlawful gathering and targeting a police patrol car with an explosive device in the village of Nuwaidrat."

Separately, four defendants were sentenced to three years in jail each over political activities against the governing Al Khalifah regime.

Top Shia cleric's pretrial detention renewed for another 15 days

In another development, distinguished Shia cleric Sheikh Khalid Fadhi al-Zaki, whom regime forces arrested late last month, has been remanded in custody for another 15 days, pending investigations.

Bahraini forces detained Sheikh Zaki along with four young men, identified as Ahmed Abdullah al-Zaki, Reza al-Houri, Abbas Muhammed Jaafar al-Zaki and Sayed

Hussein Hashim during raids on their homes in the northern villages of Abu Saiba and Shakhura early on November 30.

Thousands of anti-regime protesters have held demonstrations in Bahrain on an almost daily basis ever since a popular uprising began in the country in mid-February 2011.

They are demanding that the Al Khalifah regime relinquish power and allow a just system representing all Bahrainis to be established.

Manama has gone to great lengths to clamp down on any sign of dissent. On March 14, 2011, troops from Saudi Arabia and the United

Arab Emirates were deployed to assist Bahrain in its crackdown.

Scores of people have lost their lives and hundreds of others sustained injuries or got arrested as a result of the Al Khalifah regime's crackdown.

On March 5, 2017, Bahrain's parliament approved the trial of civilians at military tribunals in a measure blasted by human rights campaigners as being tantamount to imposition of an undeclared martial law countrywide.

Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifah ratified the constitutional amendment on April 3 last year.

### 'Zionist Regime to Continue Building Illegal Settlements'

AL-QUDS (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime says it will continue home demolition of the assailants and building new homes for settlers, following a deadly Palestinian attack in the West Bank.

The measures came in the wake of an alleged drive-by shooting attack outside the outpost Givat Asaf, northeast of Ramallah, which left two Zionist troops earlier in the day, and a similar attack on Sunday outside the nearby settlement of Ofra, which left seven other Zipnists wounded.

A total of 82 new housing units will be constructed in the West Bank settlement of Ofra and two new industrial compounds near the settlement of Anei Hefetz in the northern West Bank and Beitar Illit, south of al-Quds, according to a statement by Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office.

"Thousands of homes" built in the settlements without permits from the occupying regime would also be

retroactively legalized, the statement said.

Meanwhile, working permits allowing Palestinians to enter the occupied territories and the settlements for work would be revoked for families of the assailants and other people who helped them, the statement added.

Expanding the settlements in the West Bank is considered illegal by most of the international community because the settlements are built on the lands seized by the occupying regime in the 1967 Middle East War.

The long-standing tensions between the Zionist regime and Palestine escalated in late March when Palestinians launched protest rallies at the border of Gaza.

The regime refuses to recognize Palestine as an independent political and diplomatic entity and continues to build settlements in the occupied areas, despite objections from the United Nations.