

CAIRO (Xinhua) – Egypt hopes to reach a final, viable and binding agreement with Ethiopia and Sudan regarding filling and operating the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in the upcoming talks in Washington on Jan. 28-29, an Egyptian official told Xinhua on Saturday.

“We are working on turning the general frameworks agreed upon in the meetings in Washington on Jan. 13-15 into items of a final and binding agreement between Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan in the meetings on Jan. 28-29,” said Mohamed al-Sebaie, spokesman of the Egyptian Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation.

One who rushes madly after inordinate desire, runs the risk of encountering destruction and death.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

Taliban to Sign Deal With U.S. by End of Month: Report



In this file photo taken on June 16, 2018, Taliban militants ride a motorbike in the outskirts of Jalalabad, Afghanistan.

KABUL (Dispatches) – The Taliban are aiming to reach a withdrawal agreement with the U.S. by the end of January and are prepared to “scale down” military operations ahead of signing the deal, according to their chief spokesman.

The statement by Suhail Shaheen to Pakistani daily Dawn comes as the group and the U.S. held discussions in Doha this week, after militant sources told AFP they had offered to initiate a brief ceasefire.

“We have agreed to scale down military operations in days leading up to the signing of the peace agreement with the United States,” Shaheen told Dawn in a report published

Saturday.

He added that the Taliban were “optimistic” a deal with Washington could be signed before the end of the month and that the reduction in fighting across the country would also include the targeting of Afghan forces.

“It’s now a matter of days,” said the spokesman.

The stop-start talks between Taliban militants and the United States to end the 18-year war in Afghanistan were called off in September by U.S. President Donald Trump after an American soldier was killed in an attack by the Taliban.

Talks that had resumed after Trump visited U.S. troops in Afghanistan in November were put on “pause” again the following month after the Taliban launched an attack on a U.S. base outside Kabul killing two civilians.

The U.S. invaded the Central Asian country after the September 11, 2001 attacks under the banner of seeking to fight “terror” thousands of kilometers away from its own borders.

The invasion deposed the Taliban, but the group has never ceased its operations across Afghanistan, and has vowed to keep up its attacks until the withdrawal of all U.S.-led forces.

UN Experts Slam Germany’s Pro-Zionist Law Targeting BDS

NEW YORK (Dispatches) – United Nations special rapporteurs have unveiled a letter to the German government censuring a law that targets a pro-Palestinian boycott movement, insisting that criticism of the Zionist regime “is not anti-Semitic.”

The UN experts made the letter public this week after the 60-day reply period ended without a response from the German officials in Berlin, the UK-based Middle East Eye reported Friday.

In May 2019, the German parliament passed a motion condemning the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement as anti-Semitic.

In their October letter, the UN officials challenged the German law as “anti-Semitic” and called on Berlin to provide information on how the anti-BDS legislation complies with international human rights law, freedoms of opinion and expression, and the right to peaceful assembly.

The law - titled “Resisting the BDS Movement with Determination – Combating Anti-Semitism” – falsely accuses BDS of utilizing “patterns and methods” used by the Nazis during the Holocaust.

Reacting to passage of the German law, the BDS movement -- founded in 2005 by Palestinian activists -- accused Berlin of “complicity in Israel’s crimes of military occupation, ethnic cleansing, siege and apartheid.”

In their letter, the UN experts also pointed out that the law “unduly interferes with the right of people in Germany to engage in political speech, namely, to express support for the BDS movement.”

“We further express our concern that the motion may hinder the peaceful activities of human rights defenders, groups and organizations denouncing human rights violations as part of the BDS movement by shrinking the civic space available to them to express legitimate grievances,” they wrote.

The German city of Dortmund

reversed its decision last September to hand a literary prize to novelist Kamila Shamsie due to her support for the BDS movement.

The Zionist regime has tasked its ministry of strategic affairs and public diplomacy -- a body founded in 2006 that collaborates with the occupying regime’s interior ministry -- to organize campaigns against the BDS movement.

It issued a list back in 2018 consisting of nearly 20 international NGOs whose members would be denied entry into the Israeli-occupied territories. The list also included the UK-based Palestine Solidarity Campaign organization.

Iraq Captures Morbidly Obese Daesh Preacher

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – A staunch booster of Daesh terrorists and their supporters, hate preacher Abu Abdul Bari, has been reportedly taken by a surprise by Iraqi forces. Video from the scene - that almost instantly surfaced online - suggests, however, that even if the Daesh fanatic had been prepared, he would not have been able to do much more than vocally complain.

The Iraqi military was forced to deploy a flatbed truck to transport the extremely-fat 560-pound (254-kilograms) body of the Daesh terrorist.

Netizens instantly took to social media, producing tons of mocking memes about the fat Daesh mastermind.

Despite the obvious hilarity of the situation, the ‘preacher’ was reportedly a formidable terrorist among the ranks of Daesh. According to Fox News, citing Iraqi authorities, Bari issued numerous fatwas leading to the execution of a number of scholars and clerics, as well as the bombing of a mosque.

Bari also ordered the destruction of Mosul’s cultural heritage, specifically the ancient Mosque of Prophet Jonah, which sparked outrage and condemnation in the Islamic world.

The mosque had been built over the reputed burial site of the biblical prophet revered by Jews, Christians and Muslims who know him as Nabi Yunis.

Photos of the Daesh ringleader being captured and taken away in a truck have been widely circulated online.

Maajid Nawaz, founder of the London-based anti-extremism think tank Quilliam Foundation also shared images of Bari’s arrest.

“He was so overweight, maybe from remaining sedentary in his hiding place, that he had to be taken by police in the back of a pick-up truck,” he wrote on Facebook.

“Most religious justifications provided to ISIS (Daesh) for enslaving, raping, torturing, ethnic

cleansing and massacring Iraqis, Syrians and others are from this paltry beast who can’t even stand on his own two legs,” he wrote, adding that the images of his arrest would strike the terror group a psychological blow.

Daesh began a terror campaign in Iraq in 2014, overrunning vast swathes in lightning attacks.

Former Iraqi prime minister, Haider al-Abadi, declared the end of military operations against Daesh in the Arab country on December 9, 2017.

On July 10 that year, he had formally declared victory over Daesh in Mosul, which served as the terrorists’ main urban stronghold in Iraq.

In the run-up to Mosul’s liberation, Iraqi army soldiers and voluntary fighters from the pro-government Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) – better known by the Arabic name Hashd al-Sha’abi – had made sweeping gains against Daesh.

Iraqi forces took control of eastern Mosul in January 2017 after 100 days of fighting.

Living Situation in Gaza Hits Bare Minimum



Palestinian officials and observers have warned that the living situation in the Gaza Strip has reached the bare minimum in all aspects of life.

GAZA (Dispatches) – Palestinian officials and observers have warned that the living situation in the Gaza Strip has reached the bare minimum in all aspects of life.

Amid worsening humanitarian crises, the narrow impoverished coastal enclave, home to over 2 million Palestinians, needs a serious and immediate international intervention to end the people’s sufferings.

The United Nations has repeatedly warned of a humanitarian deterioration in Gaza. In 2019, it issued a report warning that the Gaza Strip will not be suitable for living if the Zionist regime continues imposing blockade on the enclave.

Palestinian officials said it is essential and urgent to allow comprehensive relaxations based on economic development to achieve dramatic changes of the daily life in the Gaza Strip.

Jamal al-Khodari, chairman of the Popular Committee for Ending Gaza Siege, said the UN report was a real warning of the humanitarian deterioration in the Gaza Strip suffering the occupying regime’s blockade.

“The situation in the Gaza Strip is expected to get worse during this year in all aspects of life, where humanitarian sufferings will increase with rising rates of poverty and unemployment,” he told Xinhua.

“Gaza might still be an area that fits for living, but at a bare minimum or below the international or Arab criteria. This makes the Gaza Strip one of the poorest areas in the world,” al-Khodari said.

About 85 percent of the Gazans live under the poverty line with the individual income of two U.S. dollars per day, and 300,000 are unemployed in the coastal enclave, according to the Palestinian official.

Besides poverty and unemployment, hospitals in the Gaza Strip face 50-percent shortage of medications and medical facilities, forcing many patients to seek medical treatment abroad.

Electricity shortage is another nightmare for the Gaza Strip. The majority of Gazan households have power cuts at least eight hours per day although Qatar has been providing fuels for the operation of the sole power station in the coastal enclave.

The Gaza Strip is also suffering a severe shortage of healthy water even with the inauguration of several desalination projects because not every family can afford to buy such water on a daily basis.

The Zionist regime has been imposing a tight blockade on the Gaza Strip since the summer of 2007.

Notably, the regime has waged three large-scale air and ground offensives on the Gaza Strip. The longest came in the summer of 2014 which lasted 50 days causing devastation to housing and infrastructure in the coastal enclave.

Riyadh Helps Saudi Citizens Flee U.S. to Avoid Prosecution: FBI

RIYAH (Press TV) – The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) says Saudi Arabia helps its nationals who have committed serious crimes in the United States flee the country to avoid prosecution.

According to documents obtained from the FBI, Saudi Arabia “almost certainly” helps its citizens escape prosecution in the United States in an attempt to avoid international embarrassment.

The documents added that Riyadh’s actions are “undermining the U.S. judicial process.”

“(Saudi) officials are unlikely to alter this practice in the near term unless the U.S. Government (USG) directly addresses this issue with (Saudi Arabia) and ties U.S. cooperation on (Saudi) priorities to ceasing this activity,” the FBI documents said.

Reports indicate that Saudi nationals throughout the U.S. have disappeared mysteriously after being charged with crimes such as manslaughter or rape.

However, the FBI documents do not specify how Saudi officials help their nationals who are accused of serious crimes escape from the United States.

Under the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump, the United States has strengthened its ties with Saudi Arabia.

Trump wants to get close to the Saudi kingdom for many reasons particularly because Riyadh is hostile to Iran and friendly to the Zionist regime.

Saudi Arabia is also the United States’ largest arms client, with over \$129 billion in approved purchases.