

Top UN Official Calls for International Support to Palestinians

RAMALLAH (Dispatches) – A senior UN official has urged the international community to continue with their support for the Palestinians.

Ursula Mueller, assistant secretary-general for humanitarian affairs and deputy emergency relief coordinator in the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), called on the international community to “ensure consistent and sustained funding to help alleviate the challenges faced by Palestinians,” said a press statement by the OCHA.

Mueller just concluded a six-day visit to Palestine and the occupied territories.

Mueller met with Palestinian officials and reaffirmed the UN’s commitment to addressing humanitarian needs across the occupied territory.

“Until there is a viable political solution, it is critical that the international community should continue to render support in a consistent and sustained man-

ner to meet the needs of the most vulnerable Palestinians,” Mueller said.

She urged the UN member states to continue to provide humanitarian assistance in Gaza and the West Bank and “work to rekindle a robust political dialogue and promote long-term solutions to address the root causes of this crisis.”

The comments come days after Palestinian officials and observers 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 Zion-



Palestinian protesters run for cover from Zionist troops during a demonstration along the border with the Israeli-occupied territories east of Bureij, in the central Gaza Strip, on September 20, 2019.

ist 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.

Turkey Accommodates 1,500 Militant Families in Syria’s Ra’s al-Ayn



Turkish-backed militants question residents of Jan Tamr town, some 15 kilometers east of Ra’s al-Ayn city near the Turkish-Syrian border, after they took over the town on October 27, 2019.

ANKARA (Press TV) – Turkish military forces have reportedly accommodated more than a thousand families of allied Takfiri militants in residential buildings in Syria’s northeastern province of al-Hasakah in the aftermath of a cross-border incursion against

militants of the Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG).

Informed sources, requesting anonymity, told Syria’s official news agency SANA on Monday that 1,500 militant families have squatted houses in the al-Kharabat and al-Hawarna neighbor-

hoods of the key border town of Ra’s al-Ayn in the province.

The development took place after Turkish-backed militants fired a barrage of artillery rounds and rocket shells at civilian buildings in Umm al-Keif village, also known as Timar, in the western flank of Hasakah province back on January 12 in an apparent effort to drive out the civilian population in order to pave the way for militants’ families to move in.

SANA reported at the time that the projectiles had caused material damage to houses and private property in the target area, but did not say whether there were any casualties as a result.

The report added that Syrian government forces identified the origin of the attack, and destroyed the terrorists’ launching pads in response.

On October 9 last year, Turkish military forces and Ankara-backed militants launched a

long-threatened cross-border invasion of northeastern Syria in a declared attempt to push YPG militants away from border areas.

Ankara views the U.S.-backed YPG as a terrorist organization tied to the homegrown Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), which has been seeking an autonomous Kurdish region in Turkey since 1984.

On October 22, 2019, Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan signed a memorandum of understanding that asserted YPG militants had to withdraw from the Turkish-controlled “safe zone” in northeastern Syria within 150 hours, after which Ankara and Moscow would run joint patrols around the area.

The announcement was made hours before a U.S.-brokered five-day truce between Turkish and Kurdish-led forces was due to expire.

“Members of Kata’eb Hezbollah will likely be transferred to the new base in less than two weeks,” the official said.

Late last month, the U.S. drones bombarded a Kata’eb Hezbollah’s base near the border with Syria in Iraq’s western province of Anbar, a Hashd Sha’abi statement said.

The attack took place in when the U.S. drones bombarded the base of Hashd Sha’abi’s 45th Brigade near the border town of al-Qaim, the statement said.

The bombardment left scores of the brigade’s members killed and wounded.

Norway Minister Quits Over Daesh Woman’s Return

OSLO (Dispatches) – Norway’s Finance Minister Siv Jensen and her right-wing Progress Party will resign from the government over a decision to bring home from Syria a woman suspected of Daesh affiliation, Jensen said on Monday.

The resignation robs Conservative Prime Minister Erna Solberg of her parliamentary majority and could make the country more difficult to govern, but Solberg is still ex-

pected to remain in office as head of a minority coalition.

“I brought us into government, and I’m now bringing the party out,” Jensen told a news conference.

Jensen’s departure was triggered by a cabinet decision, announced last week, that the woman and her two children would receive help to return to Norway so that one of the children could receive medical treatment.

The woman, who left Norway in 2013, was arrested upon her return on suspicion of being a member of the Daesh terrorist group that briefly controlled a territory the size of Great Britain across Iraq and Syria.

While Progress had offered to help the children, the populist party sought to deny any government assistance for adults seeking to return home after joining terrorist groups abroad or marrying foreign militants.

New York...

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“President Trump has not fully grasped that Iran’s position in the region is stronger today than it was when the United States began to contain” the country, the New York Times wrote in an opinion piece by Vali Nasr.

Iran, it said, has deep cultural ties to the region’s Shia Muslims, who look to Tehran for support as they reach for power in the new regional order.

“In another development, President Trump in 2018 squandered America’s triumph in containing Iran’s nuclear ambitions when he pulled the United States out of the multination nuclear pact signed with Iran in 2015,” the paper said.

“Now, Iran is returning to its nuclear program, and it has also been investing heavily in missiles, drones and cyber capabilities. Recently, Iran’s downing of an American drone and attacks on oil facilities in Saudi Arabia have been clearly intended to signal to America that Iran still has arrows in its quiver,” it added.

The U.S. assassination of General Soleimani, the NY Times said, has helped Iran regain its footing in the region and focused public ire on American behavior.

“America’s decision to kill General Soleimani in Iraq has already given Iran an opening, as seen in the Iraqi Parliament’s outrage that America chose to settle a score with Iran on Iraqi soil,” the paper said.

“Looking forward, here’s what we can expect from Iran: It now sees America as a threat greater than any degree of regional chaos,” it added.

According to the paper, President Barack Obama understood that it was wiser to reduce tensions with Iran than to try to fight it in a broken Arab world.

“If a conflict escalates out of control, it could mean another endless war, this time with a country of 80 million people, incensed and united,” it said.

“President Trump and his allies may see his brinkmanship as a victory, but it will prove to be a Pyrrhic one. For any strategy that will last, Mr. Trump must look beyond ‘confront and contain,’ lest he embroil America in a new quagmire in the Middle East,” the newspaper wrote.

New Quds...

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is why we must maintain our ground against them,” General Qaani said Monday.

Describing the United States as the source of enmity, wickedness and mischief against Iran, the new commander said, “If we fulfill our duty in an appropriate manner, all threats can be turned into opportunities.”

FM Zarif...

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which does not say whether it has nuclear weapons but is widely presumed to have them.

“Despite the ill will that we see from some European countries the door of negotiations with them has not been closed and the ball is in the court of these countries,” Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said Monday.

But he also told a news conference: “I don’t think Iran is ready to negotiate under the conditions they have in mind.”

Since Washington withdrew from the deal, Trump began a policy of “maximum pressure”, saying a broader deal should be negotiated on nuclear issues, Iran’s missile program and Iranian role in the Middle East.

Tehran has repeatedly held talks with European officials to find ways to keep the nuclear agreement alive, but has blamed the Europeans for failing to guarantee economic benefits that Iran was meant to receive in return for curbing nuclear work.

“The European powers’ claims about Iran violating the deal are unfounded,” Mousavi said. “Whether Iran will further decrease its nuclear commitments will depend on other parties and whether Iran’s interests are secured under the deal.” Britain has said a “Trump deal” could replace the 2015 deal, and France has called for broad talks to end the crisis.

Iran says it cannot negotiate with Trump, who broke promises by repudiating the deal reached under his predecessor Barack Obama. Mousavi repeated Iran’s rejection of a “Trump deal”.

“The fact that a person’s name is put on an agreement shows they’re not familiar with the conditions. An agreement with a person doesn’t mean anything,” he said.

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of ballistic missiles on January 8 at the Ain al-Assad air base in the western Iraqi province of Anbar, which housed U.S. forces.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said on Friday that the assassination of the top Iranian commander disgraced the U.S. as it had to both own up to the “terrorist” action and see its image dealt a blow by Iran’s retaliation.

“The day the missiles of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps crushed the U.S. base is one of the days of God. The Guards’ response was a major blow to America’s fearsome superpower image,” the Leader told a huge crowd here.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said Monday Iran reserves the right to target any country used for conspiracy and attack against Iran.

“As we had earlier said, we will target any place used for conspiracy against Iran,” he said.

Mousavi also said Iran had notified Iraq of its attack on U.S. bases in advance.

“Iran has always wanted non-interference of foreign forces in the Iraqi territory, and once Iraq officially asked for Iran’s help, we provide assistance after notifying them,” he said.

He also praised the missile attacks carried out by the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) against the Ain al-Asad base, saying it was a decisive reaction to the “cowardly” U.S. assassination of the Iranian commander.

The Iranian mission to the United Nations has been tasked with legally pursuing the U.S. assassination, he added.