

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – Lebanon's state security has arrested a U.S. national who was live-streaming videos of Beirut's protests and shared them with an Israeli newspaper, the National News Agency reported.

The videos filmed by the American national, who resides in Beirut, were broadcasted on the webpage of Haaretz Israeli newspaper.

The arrested was referred to the directorate of the Lebanese army for further investigation.

Lebanon has been witnessing heavy clashes in the past two days between riot police and protesters.

*He who is deserted by friends and relatives will often find help and sympathy from strangers.*

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

## Russia Repels Drone Attack on Syria Airbase

## Lebanon Urgently Needs New Gov't to Avoid Collapse: Hariri



This file picture shows Russian Su-30 fighter jets at the Hmeymim airbase near Syria's western coastal city of Latakia.

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – Russian air defense systems at Syria's Hmeymim airbase in western coastal province of Latakia has repelled a

drone attack, Russia's Defense Ministry has said.

The ministry said in a statement, "With the standard anti-aircraft

missile systems deployed by the Russian air base, air targets were destroyed at a safe distance," adding the incident inflicted no dam-

age on the airbase.

"There were no injuries or material damage. Russia's Hmeymim airbase is operating in normal mode."

The ministry added that terrorists used three small-sized drones in the attack, which approached the base from the northeast on Sunday.

Over the past year, the Russian military has thwarted several drone and mortar attacks launched by terrorists on the airbase, destroying 53 drones, and 27 multiple-launch rocket system shells.

Syria has been gripped by foreign-backed militancy since March 2011. The Syrian government says the Zionist regime and its Western and regional allies are aiding terrorist groups that are wreaking havoc in the country.

Russia has been helping Syrian forces in the ongoing battles across the conflict-plagued Arab country.

The Russian military assistance, which began in September 2015 at the official request of the Syrian government, has proved effective as Syrians continue to recapture key areas from Daesh and other terrorist groups across the country thanks to Russian air cover.



Lebanese anti-government protesters block the Sidon-Beirut highway in the town of Jiyeh, south of the capital Beirut, January 3, 2020.

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – Lebanon needs to quickly form a new government to stop a cycle of collapse and worsening economic and security conditions, caretaker prime minister Saad al-Hariri has tweeted.

Politicians have failed to agree on a government or an economic rescue plan since protests pushed Hariri to quit as prime minister in October.

On October 29, Lebanon's Prime Minister Saad Hariri submitted his resignation to President Michel Aoun.

Under the constitution, Hariri's cabinet would stay on in a caretaker capacity until a new government is formed.

Prime Minister-designate Hassan Diab has vowed to form a government made up of "independent specialists," who do not belong to political parties.

However, some observers are worried about efforts by foreign players to draw the country into chaos.

U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs David Hale visited Beirut last month, just as Diab assumed office.

"The continuation of the caretaker government is not the solution so let's stop wasting time and have the government bear the responsibility," Hariri said.

Beirut has been rocked in recent days by some of the worst protests since the unrest began, with 370 injured in clashes between protesters and security forces on Saturday.

President Michel Aoun met security chiefs on Monday to work out a plan for deterring violent groups that "security services have detailed information on" while protecting property and peaceful protesters, sources at the meeting said.

Lebanon's unrest is fueled in part by deep financial strains that have sunk the currency, pushed up prices and driven banks to impose capital controls.

Demonstrators hurled rocks, fireworks and other projectiles at security forces who responded by firing teargas, rubber bullets and using water cannon to disperse the crowds outside the parliament in Beirut Sunday.

The protesters chanted "Not peaceful, not peaceful" during the Sunday's protests, contradicting "peaceful, peaceful" slogan that was heard in the early days of demonstrations.

"Lebanon is being pushed to the brink of chaos and anarchy," Maha Yahya, director of the Carnegie Middle East Center.

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## Protests Continue in Iraq, Policemen Killed

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – Two Iraqi police officers have been killed and dozens of protesters wounded in Baghdad and other cities on Monday in clashes with security forces, medical and security sources said, as protests resumed after a lull of several weeks.

In Baghdad's Tayaran Square overnight, protesters threw petrol bombs and stones at police, witnesses said.

Elsewhere in southern Iraq, hundreds of protesters burned tires and blocked main roads in several cities, including Nassiriya, Kerbala and Amara.

In the Iraqi oil city of Basra, two policemen were struck

and killed by a civilian car during the protest, security sources said. The driver was allegedly trying to avoid the scene of clashes between protesters and security forces when he drove into the two officers, they said.

Baghdad police said its forces had reopened all roads that were closed by "violent gatherings". It said 14 officers were wounded near Tahrir square, including with head wounds and broken bones.

Traffic was disrupted on a highway linking Baghdad to southern cities, a witness said.

Production in southern oil-fields was unaffected by the

unrest, oil officials said.

Footage showed protesters throwing projectiles and rocks at police officers who tried to clear the sit-ins. Medical and security sources said dozens of protesters had been wounded.

The fresh protests come ahead of a rally called by prominent Iraqi cleric Moqtada Sadr on January 24 to demand the withdrawal of U.S. forces following their recent aggression in the country.

Last week, Sadr urged Iraqis to hold "a million-strong, peaceful, unified demonstration to condemn the American presence and its violations".

Iraqi political figures have

stepped up their calls for foreign forces -- including some 5,200 U.S. troops -- to leave the country.

They are outraged by U.S. assassination of top Iraqi military official Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis and Iran's General Qassem Soleimani who was visiting Iraq on an official invitation.

Iraq's parliament voted on January 5 in favor of ousting foreign forces, but U.S. President Donald Trump threatened to seize Iraqi oil revenues of up to \$35 billion held in a bank account in New York if American troops were asked to leave.

## Young Palestinian Shot by Zionist Troopers Dies of Injuries

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – A Young Palestinian man has succumbed to his wounds two years after he was shot by Zionist troops during an anti-occupation protest near the blockaded Gaza Strip fence.

Amer al-Hajjar, 30, a resident of Saftawi neighborhood north of Gaza City, lost his life on Sunday evening, Palestine's official Wafa news agency, citing medical sources, reported on Monday.

It added that he died due to wounds he had received from Zionist troops' gunshots on March 30, 2018, the first day of ongoing weekly rallies – known as the Great March of Return – which have been held in the blockaded sliver against the regime's occupation of the Palestinian territories.

### Photographer Loses Eye

For the second time in less than three

months, a Palestinian photojournalist lost his eye after being hit by Zionist troops during a protest.

A tear gas canister hit Attiyah Darwish's face in December 2018 while he was covering the weekly Friday protests in the Gaza Strip, Al-Jazeera reported.

Darwish, who sought medical treatment for his eye in Egypt and Jordan since his injury, was told on Sunday that he had lost all vision in his left eye.

"I was taking pictures, then suddenly I felt a heavy blow on my face with a muffled explosion," the 32-year-old told Palestinian news agencies, recalling the moment he was injured.

"I fell down from the pain and the shock," he added.

Darwish suffered several fractures and broken bones in his face and jaw, and severe bleeding in his left eye and ear, which

initially resulted in at least 80 percent of severe visual impairment, his doctors said.

About 310 Palestinians have been killed by Zionist troops ever since the anti-occupation protests began in Gaza. More than 18,000 other Palestinians have also sustained injuries.

The Gaza clashes reached their peak on May 14, 2018, on the eve of the 70th anniversary of Nakba Day (Day of Catastrophe), which coincided with the U.S. embassy relocation from Tel Aviv to occupied East al-Quds.

Gaza has been under siege by the Zionist regime since June 2007, which has caused a decline in living standards.

The regime has also launched three major wars against the enclave since 2008, killing thousands of Gazans each time and shattering the impoverished territory's already poor infrastructure.

ting an extremist insurgency, which surged following the 2013 military ouster of former president Mohamed Morsi.

The attacks have been largely concentrated in the restive northern Sinai Peninsula but occasionally struck elsewhere in the country.

In February 2018, Egypt launched a large-scale nationwide anti-militant operation.

Rights groups say the state of emergency coupled with the government's effective protest ban since 2013 has helped it in crushing dissent.

In September, rare minor protests broke out in Egypt triggered by online calls for President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's removal.

Some 4,000 people were arrested in the following weeks, according to local rights groups.

Activists have called it one of the worst waves of a crackdown against any dissent that was launched when Sisi officially took power in 2014.

## Egypt Extends State of Emergency to Three Years

CAIRO (AFP) – Egypt's state of emergency is set to reach the three-year mark by April after the government announced it would extend it by another three months from Monday next week.

The North African country has been under a state of emergency since April 2017 bombings of two Coptic churches by a Daesh affiliate that killed more than 40 people.

The extension comes nine years after the January 2011 uprising that toppled former president Hosni Mubarak, who had also ruled for decades under a state of emergency.

"The president of Egypt ordered the extension of the state of emergency nationwide for three months starting Monday, January 27," said the official gazette on Sunday.

Under a state of emergency, police powers such as arresting and holding citizens are extended and constitutional rights such as freedom of speech and assembly are curtailed.

Egypt has for years been bat-