

Syrian Ambassador:

# Occupation of Golan Breach of Int'l Law

NEW YORK (Dispatches) – The occupied Golan Heights will always remain an integral part of Syria and the Zionist regime's occupation of the heights is a violation of international laws, Syria's Ambassador to the United Nations says.

"The occupied Golan is part and parcel of Syria and regaining it, until the line of June 4th, 1967, with all means guaranteed by the international law, is a priority to us," Bashar al-Bashar al-Jaafari said addressing a UN Security Council session.

Washington proclamation on occupied al-Quds and the occupied Syrian Golan was a unilateral act and issued by a party that has no political, nor legal capacity to dispose of parts of the Syrian Arab Republic and occupied Palestine, he added.

"Syria calls on UNSC to force



(L to R) U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) is accompanied by Zionist Prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and U.S. Ambassador to the occupied territories David Friedman as they visit the border line between Syria and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights on March 11, 2019.

the Israeli occupation to stop its practices in the Syrian Golan and looting its resources including

oil," al-Jaafari stressed, SANA reported.

He said that the regime's mea-

sures in occupied Palestine and occupied Syrian Golan gravely violate the international law.

On March 25 last year, U.S. President Donald Trump signed a decree that suited the regime's interest regarding the Golan Heights. The signing took place at the start of a meeting with Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Washington.

Trump's move came over a year after he recognized al-Quds as the "capital" of Israel and moved the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to the occupied Palestinian city.

The United Nations has time and again stressed Syria's sovereignty over the heights.

Back in December 2018, the majority of the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution urging the Zionist regime to withdraw from Golan.

## Zionist Regime Sprays Toxic Pesticides Near Gaza Farms

GAZA STRIP (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime's planes have reportedly sprayed toxic chemical substances and dangerous pesticides on farmlands near the Gaza Strip as the occupying regime presses ahead with its acts of aggression against the besieged Palestinian coastal enclave.

Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported on Wednesday that the Israeli army sprayed the area in close proximity to the fence separating the Gaza Strip from the Israeli-occupied territories for three days last week.

The report added that the Zionist regime's ministry of military affairs has defended the aerial spraying after having refrained from it throughout last year, claiming that it was necessary to destroy "vegetation that obscures soldiers' view of the area."

According to the Palestinian Agriculture Ministry, Israeli pesticides damaged 14,000 du-

names (3,459 acres) of agricultural land in Gaza from 2014 through 2018, destroying all the crops that had been sown there.

Palestinian farmers told Haaretz that 2019 was an excellent year for them as there was no spraying.

Three human rights organizations, namely Gisha, Adalah and al-Mezan, immediately urged the Zionist regime's authorities to cease spraying after the practice resumed last week, saying there were "serious fears" that it had already harmed farmers in the area.

Anwar Jamali, a Gazan farmer, said he and his fellow farmers were given no advance notice of the spraying.

"In previous years, there was major damage. Sometimes dozens of dunams of wheat, barley and parsley were completely lost," he said.

Jamali added that the stench

of the pesticides causes people to leave the area if they can, "but barley can't get up and leave."

According to Palestinian farmers, while spraying is done on the Israeli-occupied territories, "the wind then carries the pesticides into Gaza."

A Forensic Architecture report from 2019 confirmed Palestinian claims that the pesticides spread into Gaza, reaching a distance of more than 300 meters from the Gaza-occupied territories fence.

In another development in Gaza, three Palestinians have been shot and killed by the Zionist troops.

The army says that the Palestinians were killed near the separation fence in the Gaza Strip. No further detail was immediately available about the victims.

The Zionist troops regularly gun down Palestinians in Gaza,

accusing them of attempting to enter the occupied territories or carrying out attacks on its forces.

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 US embassy relocation from Tel Aviv to occupied East al-Quds.

Gaza has been under siege by the regime since June 2007.

Since 2008, the Zionist regime has waged three wars against Gaza, where about two million Palestinians live under a 12-year Israeli blockade. Thousands of Gazans have been killed in each of these deadly wars.

### After Philippines Row

## Kuwait Shifts to Ethiopia for Domestic Workers

KUWAIT CITY (Dispatches) – Kuwait and Ethiopia are in talks to work out an agreement on sending domestic helpers to the Persian Gulf country amid an ongoing crisis with the Philippines over the recent murder of a Filipina, media reported Wednesday.

Kuwaiti and Ethiopian officials discussed in Kuwait City a draft memorandum of understanding on recruiting skilled Ethiopian domestic workers. A Kuwait committee led by the Foreign Ministry is expected to travel to Addis Ababa next week to learn first-hand about labor mechanisms in the African country.

Kuwait has set conditions for hiring Ethiopian domestic workers from Ethiopia including efficiency, previous training and proficiency in speaking the English language, according to media reports.

There are already nearly 18,000 Ethiopians, mainly women, working as domestic helpers in Kuwait, according to official figures.

Last month, a Philippine domestic helper died in Kuwait amid suspi-

cions that her employers were behind her demise.

An official Philippine autopsy found that the house maid had been sexually abused before she was murdered. Her Kuwaiti employer and his wife were arrested after the worker's death.

Last week, the Philippine authorities imposed a ban on the deployment of newly hired workers to Kuwait in reaction to the murder.

In 2018, ties between Kuwait and the Philippines soured after the body of a Philippine housemaid was found inside her employers' freezer. The row was shortly resolved after the two countries reached an agreement regulating employment of domestic workers.

Around 262,000 Filipinos work in Kuwait, nearly 60 percent of them domestic workers, according to the Philippines' foreign department.

About 10 million Filipinos work abroad to seek high-paying jobs they were unable to find at home, and their remittances are a major pillar of the Philippine economy.

### Iraqi...

(Continued From Page One)

Trump struck a more conciliatory tone on Wednesday, noting also that the U.S. presence was much smaller than during the 2003-2011 U.S. occupation.

"We're down to 5,000 so we're down to a very low number — historically low — and we'll see what happens."

Asked about his earlier threat to impose sanctions on Iraq, Trump said: "We'll see what happens, because we do have to do things on our terms."

Salih's office said in a statement: "During the meeting, reducing foreign troops and the importance of respecting the demands of Iraqi people to preserve the country's sovereignty were discussed."

Tehran responded to the assassination with a ballistic missile attack on two military bases housing U.S. forces on Jan. 8.

Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi asked Washington to prepare for a U.S. troop withdrawal in line with the request by Iraq's parliament, but Trump's administration has so far rebuffed the call to withdraw.

Washington has said it is exploring a possible expansion of NATO's mission in Iraq, a plan to "get burden-sharing right in the region".

The White House appeared to have confused Iran and Iraq in a YouTube video Wednesday, and suggested that Donald Trump met with the Iranian president.

A video of a meeting between Trump and President Salih, was titled "President Trump Participates in a Bilateral Meeting with the President of the Republic of Iran" on the White House's official YouTube channel.

The title was the result of a mix-up by the White House, which appeared to have confused the two countries.

In the video, which shows a press conference after the meeting, Trump does identify Salih accurately. He begins the video saying that it is "great to be with the president of Iraq".

"We're obviously working on a lot of things together," he says. "We're working on military, we're working on Isis — we have a whole host of difficult things to discuss, and some very positive things also."

Members of the press asked Trump whether he was planning to move troops out of Iraq but neither president gave any indication that would happen.

### Trump...

(Continued From Page One)

renewed questions over the U.S. military's policy regarding how it handles suspected brain injuries.

While the U.S. military has to immediately report incidents threatening life, limb or eyesight, it does not have an urgent requirement to do so with suspected traumatic brain injury, or TBI, which can take time to manifest and diagnose.

According to Pentagon data, about 408,000 service members have been diagnosed with traumatic brain injury since 2000.

"I don't consider them very serious injuries relative to other injuries I have seen," Trump said. "I've seen people with no legs and no arms."

Various health and medial groups for years have been trying to raise awareness about the seriousness of brain injuries, including concussions.

On Tuesday, Daily Beast said Trump twisted the Iran intelligence to manufacture the "four embassies" threat as a pretext for the assassination of top Iranian general Qassem Soleimani.

According to the American news website, when Trump publicly claimed earlier this month that he had seen intel showing Gen. Soleimani was plotting attacks on "four embassies," senior officials in Trump's national security apparatus shook their heads.

They weren't sure exactly why the president leaned on that particular talking point, and scrambled in the following days to formulate answers to a

barrage of questions from the media on exactly what the president had meant. Other officials wondered aloud whether the president had misrepresented the intelligence, it said.

"There were definitely questions about whether he had just made it up on the spot," recalled one White House official.

According to three sources familiar with the matter, the Daily Beast said, the president had simply seized on a small part of what he'd heard in private briefings, exaggerated that aspect of the intelligence, then began sharing the inflated intel to the American public.

### Indonesia...

(Continued From Page 2)

"Of course, Iran doesn't desire war and won't start one," Azad said.

"Instead, we have started the Tehran Dialogue Forum to encourage countries in our region to work together to maintain security and peace," he said.

The Tehran Dialogue Forum 2020 was held on Jan. 7, attended by high-profile figures in the region including Iranian Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif, Omani Foreign Minister Yusuf bin Alawi and former Afghanistan president Hamid Karzai.

The forum focused on discussions on territorial security and political affairs.

Although dismissing the idea of starting an open war, Iran has retaliated for General Soleimani's assassination by launching more than a dozen missiles to U.S. military bases in Iraq.

"Iran has been suppressed economically by what we call 'economic terrorism'. Iran has also been attacked with the assassination of General Soleimani, but we shall prevail. Iran has sent a firm response to them (the U.S.), and they seem to have got the message," Azad said.

### U.S. ...

(Continued From Page 2)

for a year," said Kerry Doyle, one of the lawyers.

Dehghani had previously spent two years studying at the University of Massachusetts and at least a semester at Northeastern University. He had returned to Iran in 2018 to spend time with his family, his lawyers said.

In interviews with 10 of the Iranian students who have been removed since August, many said that their visas had taken months to be processed, and that they had spent their entire savings, or taken out loans, to pay for plane tickets, entrance exams and university applications.

Even after crossing those hurdles, many said, they had been humiliated during the process of being vetted at airports, by being walked around by armed guards. One of the students said he was forced to wear handcuffs and leg cuffs.

Some of the students said they were brought to small, cell-like rooms with threadbare furniture and mattresses, and were not told how long they would have to stay there. They were not allowed to speak to family members or lawyers until they had arrived in other countries for layovers en route to Iran.

One young man named Amin, who asked to be identified by his first name to avoid jeopardizing his chances of being admitted to study in another country, said he was on his way to start a Ph.D. program at the University of Florida on Jan. 1 when he was pulled aside by an officer at the airport in Atlanta. The officer took him to a room for questioning while his suitcase and cellphone were searched by other officers in a separate room.

Amin said the officer asked why he had omitted an expired school email address from his visa application, and why one of his research papers was not listed on his resumé. Amin said he had been unaware of the significance of those details and had not thought to include them.

He was eventually fingerprinted and told he would be sent back to Iran, he said, but first he spent the night in the airport and a second night in an immigration detention facility about 30 minutes away.

## Putin to Meet Mother of U.S.-Zionist Woman Jailed in Russia

MOSCOW (Dispatches) – Russian President Vladimir Putin plans to meet with the mother of a U.S.-Zionist woman jailed in Moscow on drug charges, a Kremlin aide says, as the case has led to protests by the Zionist regime.

The Russian leader will meet Yaffa Issachar, the mother of Naama Issachar, while visiting the occupied territories on Thursday, Putin's foreign policy aide Yuri Ushakov, said.

The meeting will also include Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and

Greek Orthodox Patriarch Theophilos III of al-Quds, who have both petitioned for the 26-year-old woman's freedom.

"The humanitarian aspect of this case will be discussed at the meeting," Ushakov told journalists.

Issachar was caught with nine grams of cannabis in her checked luggage while transiting from India to the occupied territories at Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport last April.

She was convicted in October and jailed for seven-and-a-half years after a court outside

Moscow found her guilty of smuggling a "significant amount" of drugs.

The Zionist regime's foreign ministry has called the verdict "harsh and disproportionate" while Zionist President Reuven Rivlin appealed to Putin's "mercy and compassion," seeking his intervention in the case.

Issachar's appeal was rejected in December. Initial reports speculated she could be swapped for a Russian hacker in Israeli custody, but the regime's top court ruled to extradite him to the United States instead.