

BDS to Boycott Puma Over Support for Zionist Regime

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – **The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement against the Zionist regime has mounted an international campaign to boycott German sports-wear manufacturer Puma because of its sponsorship of the Israel Football Association (IFA), which includes teams based in settlements built on occupied Palestinian land.**

“When companies like Puma sponsor and profit from illegal Israeli settlements, they give a nod to Israel’s far-right regime that its criminal land grabs and attacks on Palestinian sports can continue unabated,” BDS said in a statement.

The movement called for joining the #BoycottPuma International Day of Action on June 15.

BDS then mentioned Palestinian footballers Mohamed Khalil and Mahmoud Sarsak who had to retire after Zionist troops fired directly

at their legs and the latter lost his limbs subsequently.

The campaign also pointed to the regime’s bombardment of playgrounds in the besieged Gaza Strip, its stringent restrictions on the activities of Palestinian clubs, particularly near the separation wall that snakes across the occupied West Bank and isolates large swathes of Palestinian territories, as well as the construction of Israeli sports clubs on land grabbed from Palestinians.

The BDS movement was initiated in 2005 by over 170 Palestinian organizations that were pushing for “various forms of boycott against Israel until it meets its obligations under international law.”

Thousands of volunteers worldwide have joined the BDS movement, which calls for people and groups across the world to cut eco-



A Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) rally is seen in this file photo.

nomic, cultural and academic ties to Tel Aviv, to help promote the Palestinian cause.

Last year, the occupying regime published a list of 20 organizations whose activists would be barred

from entering the occupied territories due to their support for boycott campaigns.

The regime’s strategic affairs ministry has also been allocated \$36mn to combat the BDS movement.

Daesh Attacks Syrian Troops With U.S.-Backed Militants’ Help



Members of the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) are pictured in the village of al-Sousa in Syria’s eastern province of Dayr al-Zawr, near the Syrian border with Iraq on September 13, 2018.

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – **The Daesh terrorists launched an offensive on Syrian army military points in Badiyeh region of Homs province, as battlefield sources said the raid by Daesh came in coordination with the U.S.-backed terrorists.**

The Syrian Army troops engaged in fierce clashes with the Daesh terrorists who intended to penetrate into military points in al-Sukhna Desert in eastern Homs, battlefield sources in

eastern Homs said.

The sources said several Daesh terrorists were killed after their vehicles came under strike by the Syrian Air Force.

The Arabic-language al-Watan newspaper also reported that the Daesh terrorists, who have exited al-Baqouz town under an agreement with the U.S.-backed so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), launched several attacks on the Syrian Army’s military positions in Badiyeh from Jabal

Abu Rajmin in northeastern Palmyra to eastern Daryr al-Zawr.

The Arabic-language service of Russia Today (RT) also pointed to the reemergence of the Daesh in al-Tanf region in Eastern Homs and the terrorists’ attacks on the Syrian Army’s military points, and quoted local sources as saying that an operation is underway to relocate terrorists to this region.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), meantime, announced that the Daesh’s activities in Badiyeh region of Homs and the terrorist groups’ attacks on the Syrian Army in the region have increased after the U.S.-led coalition declared the Daesh’s defeat in Eastern Euphrates.

Syrian army sources also accused the U.S.-backed militants in east and southeast Syria of collaboration with the Daesh, saying that the Daesh attack took place after the terrorists were given a pass and assistance by the U.S.-backed militants.

Meanwhile, the Russian Defense Ministry’s Center for Syrian Reconciliation said in a daily bulletin that the terrorists have

violated the ceasefire regime in the Syrian provinces of Aleppo and Latakia.

“Despite the ceasefire regime being established throughout the country, there are still cases of ceasefire regime violation by illegal armed formations in the Idlib de-escalation zone [...] Over the past 24 hours militants have attacked Rashidin, Aleppo province, outskirts of southern part of Jurin, outskirts of northwestern part of Qalaat Marza, Latakia province,” the bulletin read.

Syrian authorities continue to work on amnesty for those “who evade from military service, including those among refugees and former members of illegal armed groups,” the center noted, adding that a total of 57,681 people had been granted amnesty as of Saturday.

Russia, alongside Turkey and Iran, is a guarantor of the ceasefire regime in Syria. Moscow has also been assisting Damascus in its support of the struggle against terrorist groups, providing humanitarian aid to local residents and facilitating the return of refugees.

Turkey Detains Nine Over Attack on Main Opposition Leader

ANKARA (Dispatches) – **Turkey has arrested nine people, including a member of the ruling AK Party, after the country’s main opposition leader was punched and his car was stoned at a soldier’s funeral at the weekend, the interior minister said on Monday.**

Kilicdaroglu was attacked on Sunday as he attended a funeral in a northern district of Ankara for a soldier killed in clashes with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militants.

The incident took place after his Republican People’s Party (CHP) defeated President Tayyip Erdogan’s AK Party in March 31 mayoral elections in the capital Ankara and Turkey’s largest city Istanbul, painful losses for the ruling party.

During campaigning, Erdogan often accused the CHP and Kilicdaroglu of links to terrorism because it had election deals in some constituencies with the pro-Kurdish opposition party HDP, which Erdogan said has ties to the outlawed PKK.

The HDP denies links to the PKK, which has waged an insurgency for autonomy in Turkey’s largely Kurdish southeast since 1984, and is deemed a terrorist organization by Turkey, the United States and the European Union.

Interior Minister Suleyman Soyly said that nine people had been detained, adding that Kilicdaroglu’s recent “contacts” with the Kurdish party (HDP) made him a target.

Afghan Court Extends Ghani’s Presidential Term Until September Elections

KABUL (Reuters) – **Afghanistan’s Supreme Court has ruled that President Ashraf Ghani can stay in office until a much-delayed presidential election, which is due to be held after his mandate expires next month, officials said.**

The election, originally scheduled for April this year, has been postponed twice to allow more time to organize the poll, first to July and then to Sept. 28, well after the official end of Ghani’s five-year term on May 22.

Amid growing division in Kabul, opposi-

tion politicians demanded he step down as soon as his mandate ends and give way to an interim government to oversee peace talks with the Taliban. Ghani, seeking a second term, has ruled that out.

Government officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed the court decision, but the way the news was announced underscores the confusion in Afghan politics as Ghani’s term nears its end.

Television station Ariana TV first carried

the news on Sunday, citing a court document ruling that the constitution allowed the president to remain in office until the election.

However, with political rivals attacking the move and accusing the government of imposing the ruling, the court refused to confirm the decision, saying it was for the government to announce.

The presidential palace press office said only the court could announce its own decision.

Iran-Pakistan... (Continued From Page One)

from safe havens in Pakistan and has repeatedly called on Islamabad to crack down on them.

Tehran has stepped up security along its long border with Pakistan after a suicide bomber martyred 27 members of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) in mid-February in southeastern Iran, with Iranian officials saying the attackers were based inside Pakistan.

Ahead of Khan’s visit, families of several Iranian border guards martyred by terrorist groups wrote to the Pakistani premier and asked him to take swift action against groups freely crossing into Iran from Pakistan.

Iran had in the past urged Pakistan to address the issue, even offering to launch a joint military and intelligence operation to locate and eliminate terrorists in Pakistani territories.

“Unfortunately, over the past few months we witnessed some tensions caused by some terrorists who acted savagely,” President Rouhani said.

“We are glad that the Pakistani side now recognizes groups with such inhumane conduct as terrorist and treats them as such.”

Rouhani said his meeting with Prime Minister Khan marked a new milestone in mutual ties, adding Iran and Pakistan would continue to maintain their close ties despite outside pressures.

“Both sides agree that no third country whatsoever can affect the friendly and brotherly ties that exist between Iran and Pakistan,” he said, adding that Khan had officially invited him for a visit to Islamabad.

According to Rouhani, they also agreed on the need for both sides to expand joint efforts to bring peace to Afghanistan.

Other security issues discussed in the meeting included U.S. President Donald Trump’s recent designation of the IRGC as a terrorist organization and his recognition of Syria’s occupied Golan Heights as Israeli territory, Rouhani noted.

Addressing reports about Saudi and U.S. pressure on Pakistan to join an Arab-Israeli front against Iran in the region, Rouhani said PM Khan had assured him that Pakistan “has never joined and will never join any coalition.”

Rouhani also said Iran was ready to supply oil and gas to Pakistan and increase electricity exports to the country by tenfold.

He also said Tehran was interested in expanding trade between Iran’s Chabahar and Pakistan’s Gawader ports by connecting them with a railway.

The president noted that Iran, Turkey and Pakistan as co-founders of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) could increase economic cooperation by connecting their railway systems. This, he said, would open a corridor from Europe to China.

Khan and his high-profile delegation touched down in Tehran on Sunday night after a brief stop in the northeastern city of Mashhad, where the premier paid a visit to the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS), the 8th Shia Imam.

Trump... (Continued From Page One)

face U.S. sanctions for dealing with Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) after the group’s designation by Washington as a foreign terrorist group, according to three current and three former U.S. officials cited by Reuters.

The exemptions, granted by Pompeo and described by a State Department spokesman in response to questions from Reuters, mean officials from countries such as Iraq who may have dealings with the IRGC would not necessarily be denied U.S. visas.

The exceptions to U.S. sanctions would also permit foreign executives who do business in Iran, where the IRGC is a major economic force, as well as humanitarian groups working in regions such as northern Syria, Iraq and Yemen, to do so without fear they will automatically trigger U.S. laws on dealing with a foreign terrorist group.

American officials have long said they fear the designation could endanger U.S. forces in places such as Syria or Iraq, where they may operate in close proximity to IRGC-allied groups.

The State Department’s Near Eastern and South and Central Asian bureaus, wrote a rare joint memo to Pompeo before the designation expressing concerns about its potential impact, but were overruled, two U.S. officials said on condition of anonymity.

The action was also taken over the objections of the Defense and Homeland Security

Departments, a congressional aide said.

“Simply engaging in conversations with IRGC officials generally does not constitute terrorist activity,” the State Department spokesman said when asked what repercussions U.S.-allied countries could face if they had contact with the IRGC.

Sri Lanka... (Continued From Page One)

a senior official at the government’s forensic division. The others targeted three churches and two other hotels.

A fourth hotel and a house in a suburb of the capital Colombo were also hit, but it was not immediately clear how those attacks were carried out. “Still the investigations are going on,” Weliana said.

Most of the attacks came during Easter services and when hotel guests were sitting down for breakfast buffets.

Cabinet spokesman Rajitha Senarathne said an international network was involved, but did not elaborate.

The president, Maithripala Sirisena, said in a statement the government would seek foreign assistance to track the overseas links.

Sri Lanka was at war for decades with ethnic minority Tamil separatists, most of them Hindu, but violence had largely ended since the government victory in the civil war, 10 years ago.

Sri Lanka’s 22 million people include minority Christians, Muslims and Hindus.

Most of the dead and wounded were Sri Lankans although government officials said 32 foreigners were killed, including British, U.S., Australian, Turkish, Indian, Chinese, Danish, Dutch and Portuguese nationals.

Denmark’s richest man Anders Holch Povlsen and his wife lost three of their four children in the attacks, a spokesman for his fashion firm said.

The U.S. State Department said in a travel advisory “terrorist groups” were plotting possible attacks in Sri Lanka and targets could include tourist spots, transport hubs, shopping malls, hotels, places of worship and airports.

There were fears the attacks could spark communal violence, with police reporting late on Sunday there had been a petrol bomb attack on a mosque in the northwest and arson attacks on two shops owned by Muslims in the west.

Traffic was uncharacteristically thin in normally bustling Colombo after an island-wide curfew was lifted earlier Monday.

Soldiers with automatic weapons stood guard outside major hotels and the World Trade Centre in the business district, a Reuters witness said.

Questions over why the intelligence report warning was not acted upon could feed into a feud between Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and the president.

Sirisena fired the premier last year and installed opposition strongman Mahinda Rajapaksa in his stead. Weeks later, he was forced to re-instate Wickremesinghe because of pressure from the Supreme Court but their relationship is still fraught as a presidential election nears.

Flood... (Continued From Page 2)

This had seemingly become an ongoing joke among the group’s members.

Two women in their 60s, Sultaneh Imani and Shamsi Malekipoor, traveled from a nearby village despite being fortunate enough to escape the worst of the floods.

A few miles from Pol-e-dokhtar, the small village of Baba Zeyd has only 530 residents. Once a breadbasket for the area, rich in vegetables and crops, it is now almost entirely destroyed. Its residents were in a state of shock.

“Mother Nature cried for two weeks and we almost drowned in her tears,” said Mahin Fathi, a grandmother sitting outside the wreckage of her home.

Her neighbor, the local lawyer, was angry.

His home gone and his family’s livelihood washed away, Khashayar Javadi told NBC News that the land was so badly damaged they won’t be able to sow crops or vegetables for years to come.

The government has offered small interest-free loans to help villagers rebuild their homes.

President Rouhani visited Lorestan and Khuzestan provinces on Saturday to assess relief operations and pledged to unsparingly support the affected families.

“God willing, we will stay with you until your life returns to normal. All the thoughts and efforts of the Leader (of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei) are to rebuild this region,” he told locals in Pol-e-Dokhtar.

“We will also stand with you; all the Armed Forces, the Basij and the people will do,” the president added.