

RAMALLAH, West Bank (Reuters) - Palestinians urged Egypt and Jordan on Wednesday to reconsider their attendance at a U.S.-led conference on June 25-26 in Bahrain, voicing concern it would weaken any Arab opposition to Washington's coming peace plan.

Palestinian leaders, who are boycotting the meeting, say the still unpublished plan falls short of their goal of statehood. They primarily blame a halt in U.S. aid and Israeli restrictions for an economic crisis in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

LONDON (Dispatches) -- A petition to boycott the BBC have gained a huge momentum with hundreds of thousands across the United Kingdom supporting it just two days after the media organization announced it would restore a tax for old people to watch its TV content. The Daily Express said in a Wednesday report that more than 310,000 signatures had been gathered within just hours of the launch of the petition by charity Age UK demanding the British government to take action against BBC's decision earlier this week to restore the annual license fees for over-75 pensioners.

Viewpoint

Diabolical Arab Duo Destabilizing Sudan

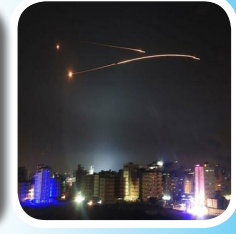
Iran Award Winning Movie Screened in Athens



Germany, Italy, Belgium Stay Perfect in Euro 2020 Qualifying



Syria Thwarts Zionist Regime's Missile Attack



Missile Bypasses U.S. Patriot Missile System Yemen Surprises Saudi Arabia With Airport Attack

DUBAI (Dispatches) – The Yemeni army and their Houthi allies said on Wednesday they had fired a cruise missile at Abha airport in southern Saudi Arabia, which left 26 people wounded.

A Saudi military statement said a projectile hit the arrivals hall at Abha airport, which is about 200 km (125 miles) north of the Yemen border and serves domestic and regional routes.

The Houthi media center said the strike destroyed the control tower. The attack follows an armed drone strike last month on two oil-pumping stations in the kingdom that were claimed by the Houthis.

A Houthi military spokesman on Tuesday threatened that the group would target every airport in Saudi Arabia and that the coming days would reveal "big surprises".

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates intervened in Yemen in 2015 to try to restore a former government which resident and then fled the capital Sanaa to Riyadh in late 2014.

A Houthi military spokesman said the attack was a response to Saudi Arabia's "crimes" against Yemen. "The most modern American systems could not intercept the missile," he said in comments carried by the group's media center.

The Saudi military spokesman did not immediately respond when asked if the projectile had been intercepted by the kingdom's Patriot missiles before hitting the airport.

The Houthis have previously targeted Saudi cities with drones and missiles. In March 2018 an Egyptian was killed in Riyadh by missile shrapnel.

The nearest Patriot battery to Abha airport is about 20 km to the north, said Jeremy Binnie, Middle East & Africa editor of Jane's Defense Weekly.

"A cruise missile might be able to come in at a sufficiently low altitude that it could not be engaged before reaching its target," he said.

On Tuesday, the spokesman for Yemeni armed forces Brigadier General Yahya Saree urged Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to put an immediate end to their military aggression against Yemen or face major surprises.

Speaking during a news conference in Sanaa on Tuesday, he said Yemeni army forces and their Houthi allies had launched an airstrike against King Khalid Air Base the previous evening. A squadron of domestically-

manufactured Qasef-2K combat drones were used against the base near the southwestern Saudi city of Khamis Mushait.

The attack targeted advanced radars, arms depots and control rooms in the base. Saree said King Khalid Air Base serves as a key launchpad for airstrikes on Yemen.

"Thank God, we are capable of carrying out more than one operation at the same time," he said later after the Abha airport operation, adding that Yemeni forces' "list of targets is increasing day by day."

"Our surprises will be unveiled soon. God willing we will adopt the equation of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," he said.

On Sunday, a Houthi spokesman said the airports of countries involved in the war on Yemen and blockade of the country would be targeted one after the other.

"Given the criminal siege on Sanaa International Airport and the failure of the UN to take proper measures... the countries of the aggression must know that their airports are within the range of our attacks," Muhammad Abdul-Salam tweeted.

Last week, Yemeni forces and their allies launched multiple airstrikes against Jizan airport in Saudi Arabia near the border with Yemen, using Qasef-2K drones.

Zionist Settlers Torch Palestinian Breadbasket

OCCUPIED WEST BANK (Middle East Eye) – As the families of al-Mughayyir village prepared to celebrate the start of Eid al-Fitr, Israeli settlers set fire to their fields, twice.

On the first day of Eid, June 5, the families, who largely depend on their livelihood from farming and shepherding, rushed to the scene only to find their lands northeast of the occupied West Bank city of Ramallah engulfed in flames.

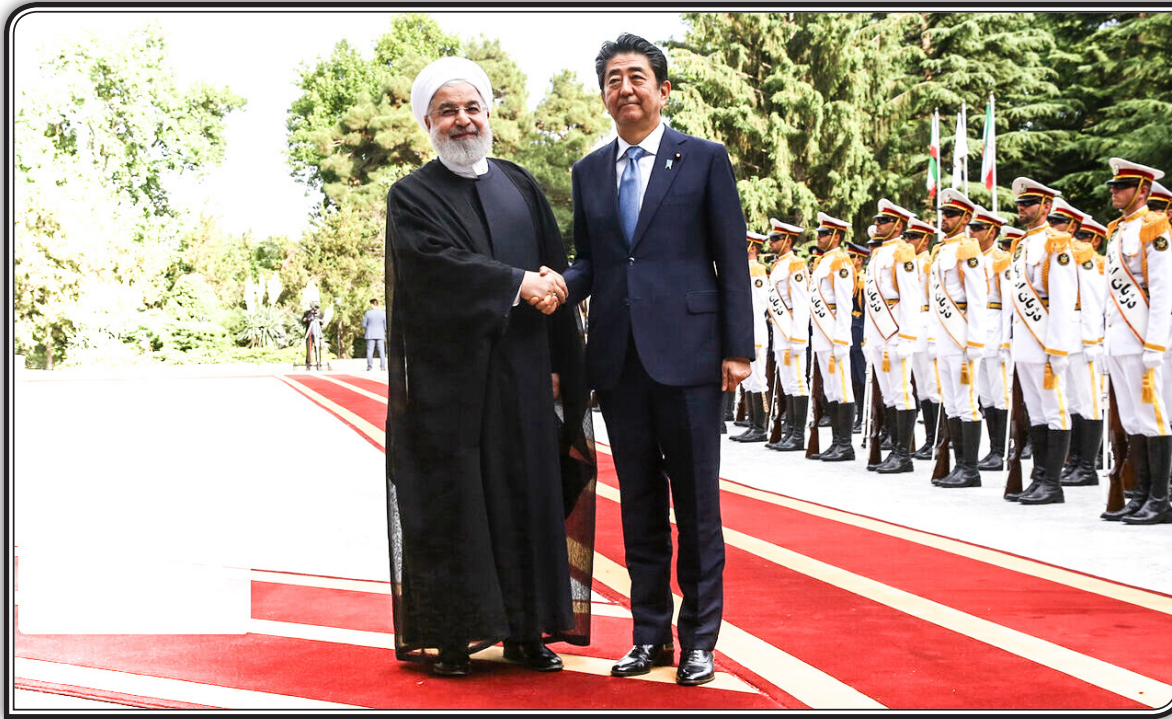
Rather than rejoice over the holiday, the village's residents spent the morning putting out the blaze.

A day later, Ayham Abu Naem received a dismaying call from a friend in the nearby village of Kufr Malek, informing him that his fields, too, had been torched.

In less than an hour, Abu Naem's months of hard work became a worthless pile of ashes.

Standing on his scorched field in distress, Abu Naem, a man in his late 50s, described the abundance that once stood around him: 80 olive trees and 70 dunums (7 hect-

Japan, Iran Mark 90th Anniversary of Ties PM Abe: I've Finally Realized My Visit



Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, right, and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani pose after reviewing the honor guard in Tehran, June 12, 2019.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Shinzo Abe arrived here for important talks with Iranian authorities, becoming the first Japanese prime minister to visit since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Abe's flight touched down at Tehran's Mehrabad International Airport on Wednesday afternoon, with Iranian Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif on hand to welcome him, before heading to talks with President Hassan Rouhani.

"I've finally realized my visit to Iran. Since taking office (in 2012), I have always placed importance on our relations with Iran," Abe

told Rouhani at the outset of their talks at Tehran's Saadabad premises.

Rouhani welcomed Abe, who visited Iran as the two nations mark the 90th anniversary of diplomatic relations. Since returning to power in 2012, Abe has held seven meetings with Rouhani.

Abe, the first sitting Japanese prime minister to visit Iran since Takeo Fukuda in 1978, will also hold a meeting with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Thursday. It will be the first time a Japanese prime minister has met with

the Leader. Before leaving Tokyo, Abe said he wants to have candid talks with the Iranian authorities, amid growing worries in the Middle East and beyond about the risk of conflict between Tehran and Washington.

"There are concerns over rising tensions in the Middle East. While the situation attracts the attention of the international community, for peace and stability in the region Japan wants to play a role as much as it can," Abe told reporters at Tokyo's Haneda airport before departing for a two-day visit to Tehran.

ares) of land rich with barley. The crop had been set for harvesting in a matter of days.

"The settlers are spiteful, and they try to harm us in every way possible," he told Middle East Eye.

"We have no choice but to repair and restore the land to make it fit for farming again - we will not abandon our fields and leave."

Abu Naem grows barley and wheat to feed his sheep, which consume about two tonnes every 10 days - worth some 3,000 shekels (\$840). The farmer could only sustain his flock by growing his own crops, which cover four months of food for the livestock.

Settler attacks on the village have noticeably increased since March 2017, when residents of al-Mughayyir began weekly peaceful marches against new homes for Israeli settlers being built on their lands. Israeli forces have responded violently to the demonstrations, including with live ammunition. In January, a large group of

armed Israeli settlers descended on the village and opened fire indiscriminately on the Palestinian residents, killing Hamdi Naasan, a 38-year-old father of four, with a bullet to his back. Thirty others were wounded.

"We're not leaving, even if they kill us. We will remain steadfast on our lands - there is no alternative"

Residents of the village said that when Israeli soldiers arrived to the scene, they also started firing live bullets.

Adel Ibrahim Abu Alia, a father of five, was one of the survivors of the attack. He took a bullet to his chest, which has caused permanent paralysis in his right arm.

Shortly after the Eid arson attacks, Abu Alia gathered his family and rushed to harvest his wheat early, fearing their fields would be the next target.

Despite the negative effects of early harvesting, he says it is a price he is willing to pay. "We're not leaving, even if they

kill us. We will remain steadfast on our lands - there is no alternative," he tells MEE.

The settler fires spread to fields belonging to Kamal Abdullah al-Naasan's family. On 8 June, he went to harvest what remained of his crops.

Nassan's fields, which have been repeatedly torched by Israeli settlers over the past three years, lie just off the Alon Road - a route that Palestinians are forbidden from driving on, unless with a special permit.

Once he got to his fields, however, Israeli settlers intentionally rammed their car into the 65-year-old as he stood by the side of the road, breaking his foot.

He told MEE that over the past few years he has victim to violent physical assault by settlers, who would beat him unconscious.

"Two years ago, a settler beat me on the head with a sharp object and I fell to the ground. Then other settlers joined in the attack, kicking

"To ease tensions, I'd like to have a frank exchange of views" by taking advantage of Tokyo's traditionally friendly ties with Tehran, Abe said.

Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono and his Iranian counterpart Zarif held talks in Tehran a few hours before Abe's arrival.

During the talks, Kono encouraged Iran to abide by a 2015 deal between the country and a group of world powers that curbed its nuclear program in return for lifting sanctions, according to the Japanese Foreign Ministry.

The trip gives Abe a rare opportunity to raise his diplomatic profile ahead of a Group of 20 summit in Japan on June 28 and 29 before an election for the upper house this summer.

But Abe would not simply be a mediator, Japanese officials say, as Tokyo's aim is to ensure stability in the Middle East, a critical factor for resource-scarce Japan. Iran had long been one of the major oil exporters until the United States ended its sanctions waivers granted to Iranian crude buyers.

Officials here said Iran will ask Japan to pressure Washington into lifting oil sanctions.

"Japan can help in easing the ongoing tension between Iran and America... As a goodwill gesture, America should either lift the unjust oil sanctions or extend the waivers or suspend them," Reuters quoted what it called a senior Iranian official.

To achieve his aim of slashing (Continued on Page 7)

and beating," he said. "I would have died if residents of the village didn't come to my aid."

A member of the farming committee in al-Mughayyir village, Kathem al-Hajj Muhammad, said settler attacks are clearly "aimed at inflicting heavy losses on the farmers and coercing them to leave their lands".

He told MEE that Israeli settlers have burned some 1,500 dunums (150 hectares) of wheat and barley fields, as well as 150 olive trees, since the start of June.

"We have suffered great losses, and this continues to happen every year. There is nothing to deter the settlers from attacking us and our fields," he said.

The escalation in attacks coincides with an Israeli court's decision on 13 May to clear an Israeli settler of murder charges he faced after he and other settlers allegedly set a Palestinian home on fire in the nearby village of Duma in 2015. (Continued on Page 7)