

DOHA (Reuters) – Two Qatari military training planes collided in mid-air, but the pilots managed to eject safely, the defense ministry said on Wednesday.

“During a training flight a collision occurred between two training planes and the pilots were able to safely get out by using the ejection seat,” a statement on the ministry’s Twitter account said. It did not say when the collision happened.

There are two things that I fear for you most: following one’s passions and forever hoping, because following one’s passions impedes truth, and forever hoping causes one to forget the Hereafter.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

# Dozens of Saudi Mercenaries Killed in Yemen Missile Strike

SANAA (Dispatches) – Dozens of Saudi-sponsored mercenaries have been killed and scores of others sustained injuries when Yemeni army forces and their allies fired a domestically-manufactured ballistic missile at their camp in Saudi Arabia’s southern province of Najran.

Yemeni missile defense units launched a Badr-F missile at a position of Saudi mercenaries near al-Khazra border crossing, the spokesman for Yemeni Armed Forces, Brigadier General Yahya Saree, said on Wednesday.

He added that the missile hit the designated target with great precision, leaving 45 Saudi-paid militiamen killed and tens of others injured. The death toll is expected to further rise as some of the injured are in critical condition.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched a devastating campaign against Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the government of Hadi back to power and crushing the Houthi Ansarullah movement.

The U.S.-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project



This picture provided by the media bureau of Yemen’s Operations Command Center shows a Badr-F ballistic missile on display in Sana’a, Yemen, on July 7, 2019.

(ACLED), a nonprofit conflict-research organization, estimates that the Saudi-led war has claimed the lives of over 60,000 Yemenis since January 2016.

The war has also taken a heavy toll on the country’s infrastructure, destroying hospitals, schools, and factories. The UN says over 24 million Yemenis are in dire need of humanitarian aid, including 10 million suffering from extreme

levels of hunger.

Earlier on Wednesday, a woman and her two children suffered injuries when Saudi-led coalition forces launched a barrage of artillery rounds at a residential neighborhood in July 7 area of the strategic western Yemeni province of Hudaydah.

Missiles and mortar shells also rained down on several villages in the Monabbih district of Ye-

men’s mountainous northwestern province of Sa’ada. There were no immediate reports about possible casualties and the extent of damage caused.

On Tuesday, Yemen’s Houthi Ansarullah movement has called for the full withdrawal of the Saudi-led military coalition from the conflict-ridden Arab country, after the United Arab Emirates, a key part of that alliance, said it was going ahead with plans to reduce the number of troops in Yemen.

“We call on the countries of aggression to declare withdrawal from Yemen. The Republic of Yemen rejects the aggression, siege and aerial embargo,” Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, the chairman of the Supreme Revolutionary Committee of Yemen, wrote in a post published on his official Twitter page.

He added, “Withdrawal from Yemen is the ideal decision that must be taken at this particular time. It is just good enough for the countries of aggression to use Yemen a test field for European and American weapons for five years, and prove the ugliness of their crimes to the world.”

## Amid Khashoggi Uproar Media Watchdog Visits Saudi Arabia Seeking Journalists’ Release



In this file photo taken on October 5, 2018 a protestor holds a picture of journalist Jamal Khashoggi during a demonstration in front of the Saudi consulate in Istanbul.

RIYADH (Dispatches) – Global media watchdog Reporters Without Borders said on Wednesday it had visited Saudi Arabia to seek freedom for 30 jailed journalists amid sustained Western criticism of Riyadh following the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

The group, known by its French acronym RSF, had not publicized its April visit, which it called unprecedented, in hopes that the authorities would pardon the detainees during the holy Muslim month of Ramadan, which ended weeks ago, it said at the start of a media freedom conference in London.

Secretary-General Christophe DeLoire led the delegation, which met Saudi officials including the ministers of justice and media, the minister of state for foreign affairs, the public prosecutor and the head of the state-backed human rights commission.

The Saudi government communications office did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the visit and the status of the detainees.

The kingdom has come under heightened international criticism over its human rights record after Khashoggi was murdered and dismembered by Saudi operatives inside its Istanbul consulate last October.

The CIA and some Western countries believe the killing was ordered by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. A UN expert last month said he and other senior officials should be investigated given credible evidence against them.

An independent UN rights expert, who conducted an investigation into the murder of Khashoggi last October, has criticized the United States for its inaction over the case.

“(It) has the jurisdiction or at least the interest to take action. Silence is not an option. Speaking up is required but not enough. We have to act,” UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions Agnes Callamard told a conference in London hosted by human rights groups on the killing of the Saudi-born dissident.

She stressed that Washington could act “either through an FBI investigation (or) a civil law investigation... (or) the declassification of CIA and other materials. All of those things I believe can be done and should be done.”

“The U.S. was not at the top of the cooperation chain. They did the minimum to keep them within the remit of what is expected from a Western government,” Callamard said.

## ‘U.S.-Led Coalition Should Address Harm to Civilians in Syria’

WASHINGTON (Press TV) – Human Rights Watch (HRW) has called upon the US-led coalition purportedly fighting the Daesh terrorist group should address the harm to civilians during military operations in war-torn Syria.

The New York-based rights organization reported that the alliance has not thoroughly investigated the attacks that killed civilians or created a program for compensation, or other assistance to civilians who suffered harm from its operations.

It cited field investigations into 4 apparently unlawful coalition airstrikes in Syria’s northeastern Hasakah province from 2017 and 2018, where no compensation or condolence payments were made to the victims. The aerial raids reportedly killed 63 civilians and damaged and de-

stroyed property.

Human Rights Watch further highlighted that whilst the US Congress authorized the Defense Department in the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to make condolence payments to civilians in Syria in December 2016, the process for making claims has not been defined.

“The US should promptly develop a standardized condolence payment process and conduct outreach as feasible with affected communities to explain and publicize the process. The process should allow safe and convenient avenues to submit claims in the person’s preferred language and should identify local partners as facilitators.

“Condolence payments should reflect the circumstances, needs,

and preferences of affected civilians. Options may include public acknowledgement, apologies, monetary payments, and livelihood assistance,” it said.

The rights organization went on to ask members of the U.S.-led military coalition to coordinate their efforts to create a unified system to track, assess, and investigate reports of civilian casualties and to provide prompt and equitable condolence payments and other forms of amends.

“In cases in which coalition forces are found to have committed laws-of-war violations, appropriate compensation should be swiftly paid to the victims or their families,” Human Rights Watch said.

“For the civilians who suffered under ISIS (Daesh) rule to rebuild their lives, the coal-

ition should include condolence payments to those families who were harmed by their military operations,” Lama Fakih, deputy Middle East director at the human rights organization said.

“Providing victims of airstrikes with some help for their suffering would be an important step,” Fakih pointed out.

The US-led coalition has been conducting airstrikes and operations against what are said to be Daesh targets inside Syria since September 2014 without any authorization from the Damascus government or a United Nations mandate.

The military alliance has repeatedly been accused of targeting and killing civilians. It has also been largely incapable of achieving its declared goal of destroying Daesh.

### New Kurdish PM:

## Priority Is Stronger Baghdad Ties, Not Independence

ERBIL (Dispatches) – Two years after a failed independence bid plunged Iraq’s Kurdistan Region into months of instability, the new regional prime minister said his priority was strengthening ties with Baghdad, signaling dreams of self-rule should be put on hold.

Masrour Barzani, sworn in as regional prime minister on Wednesday, told Reuters in an exclusive interview that under his leadership, the Kurdistan Regional Government’s focus would be to establish a “strong and constructive” relationship with Baghdad, leaving the question of independence aside for now.

“This (independence referendum) hap-

pened in the past and it’s a reflection of the enduring aspiration of a nation,” said Barzani, speaking at his palace in the hillside village of Salaheddine, near regional capital Erbil.

“However, the focus of my government will be how to build a stronger relationship and partnership with Baghdad,” he said, adding he would look to fix “those issues that were actually keeping us apart.”

The independence bid was led by Barzani’s father Masoud, who stepped down as Kurdish president in 2017 after the referendum backfired and prompted a military offensive from Baghdad.

At stake for the new premier are long-run-

ning disputes over independent oil exports, revenue sharing, security, and territory which have plagued ties between Erbil and Baghdad since a U.S.-led invasion toppled Saddam Hussein in 2003.

Barzani was instrumental in orchestrating the September 2017 referendum, which was held over the objections of Baghdad and regional powers. It was seen as the culmination of years of oppositional politics by the semi-autonomous region.

The backlash was swift, threatening to undo the years of unprecedented autonomy the region had enjoyed. Relations eventually improved, cemented by a change of government in both capitals.

## Turkey Warns U.S. Against Harmful Steps Over Russian S-400s

ANKARA (Dispatches) – Turkey called on the United States on Wednesday to avoid steps harmful to bilateral relations after the U.S. State Department spokeswoman reiterated Ankara would face “real and negative consequences” for acquiring Russian S-400 systems.

Turkey’s foreign ministry spokesman said the comments by the State Department’s Morgan Ortogus on Tuesday were not in line with the spirit and content of talks between presidents of the two countries at the G20 summit last month.

“We invite the U.S. side to avoid taking wrong steps, excluding diplomacy and dialogue, that will harm relations,” spokesman Hami Aksoy said, adding Ankara had still not received a response to its proposal to set up a working group to look into the impact of the S-400 purchase.

President Tayyip Erdogan said

after meeting President Donald Trump in Osaka that the United States did not plan to impose sanctions on Ankara for buying the S-400s, which he said would arrive in the first half of July.

Trump said Turkey had not been treated fairly but did not rule out sanctions.

The United States says the S-400s are not compatible with NATO’s network and could compromise its Lockheed Martin F-35 stealth fighter jets, an aircraft Turkey is helping to build and planning to buy.

Moscow and Ankara finalized an agreement on the delivery of the S-400 in December 2017.

Back in April 2018, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin said in Ankara that they had agreed to expedite the delivery of the S-400. At the time, it was said that the delivery could be made between late 2019 and early 2020.