

DAMASCUS (Sputnik) – Terrorists have carried out an artillery attack against the Khmeimim airbase in Syria, injuring four civilians, Russia's ministry of defense has reported.
"On the 5th of August at around 2:30 pm Moscow time, air-space control equipment at the Khmeimim airbase detected the launch of three multiple launch rockets in the direction of the Russian airbase coming from the north," the MoD said in a press statement. According to the military, the barrage did not hit the airbase, which is continuing its operations as normal.

A friend cannot be considered a friend unless he is tested on three occasions: in time of need, behind your back and after your death.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

Iraq Launches 3rd Phase of Major Anti-Daesh Operation



This file photo shows members of the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), also known as Hashd al-Sha'abi, advancing toward Tal Afar, Iraq, on August 22, 2017.

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – Iraqi forces on Monday launched the third phase of a major offensive to hunt down remnants of Daesh terrorists in eastern and northern Iraq, the Iraqi military said.

A statement by the media office of the Joint Operations Command said the Iraqi army, police and paramilitary Hashd Shaabi units, backed by the Iraqi and U.S.-led coalition aircraft, carried out the third phase of the offensive dubbed "Victory Will" in the eastern Diyala province and Nineveh province in the north. The troops began search op-

erations in the rural areas near the towns of al-Muqdadiah, Jalawla and Khanaqin in Diyala province, the statement said.

Also in Nineveh province, the troops commenced an operation to clear the rugged areas of al-Atshana and the mountain ranges of Badush and Sheikh Ibrahim in west and northwest of the provincial capital city of Mosul, 400 km north of Baghdad, the statement said.

It added that further details to be released later about the operations. Meanwhile, Members of the pro-government Iraqi Popular Mobiliza-

tion Units (PMU), known in Arabic as Hashd al-Sha'abi, have managed to cleanse more than a dozen villages in the southern part of the country's province of Nineveh during the third phase of a major offensive to hunt down remnants of the Daesh terrorist group.

The media bureau of Hashd al-Sha'abi forces announced in a statement on Monday that the 40th Brigade of the volunteer forces had purged 13 villages, including Ayn al-Jahesh, Msheirfeh, 'Arish, Khirbet al-Yazidi, Albu Jarad, Ayn al-Bayda, of Daesh extremists.

Separately, the 4th and 24th brigades of Hashd al-Sha'abi, supported by government troops, destroyed a number of militant hideouts and defused six improvised explosive devices northeast of the town of Miqdadiyah, which lies in Iraq's eastern province of Diyala and located about 80 kilometers northeast of the capital Baghdad.

A statement by the media office of the Joint Operations Command said on Monday that the Iraqi army, police and Hashd al-Sha'abi units, backed by the Iraqi Air Force fighter jets, had launched the third phase of the Will of Victory Operation in the eastern Diyala province and Nineveh province in the north.

The statement said the troops had begun search operations in rural areas near the towns of Miqdadiyah, Jalawla and Khanaqin in Diyala province.

Also in Nineveh province, the troops commenced an operation to clear the rugged areas of al-Atshana and the mountain ranges of Badush and Sheikh Ibrahim in west and northwest of the provincial capital city of Mosul.

The second-in-command of the Joint Operations Command (JOC), Lieutenant General Abdul Amir Rasheed Yarallah, said in a statement on July 20 that Iraqi military forces had launched the second phase of the Will of Victory Operation to hunt down Daesh remnants north of Baghdad and areas nearby.

The statement noted that the offensive aims to "beef up security and stability in areas north of Baghdad and surrounding areas in the provinces of Diyala, Salahuddin and Anbar."

Syrian Army Resumes Counter-Terrorism Operations in Northwest



Members of the pro-Syrian government forces posing with portraits of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his late father Hafez al-Assad while waving a national flag as they gather in a public square in the Syrian border town of Albu Kamal.

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – The Syrian army said on Monday it was resuming military operations in a Russian-led campaign in northwest Syria that has uprooted tens of thousands and killed hundreds, blaming Turkey for not abiding by its commitments under a truce deal.

Syrian state media said on Thursday the ceasefire would depend on militants fulfilling a Russian-Turkish deal that tried last year to create an Idlib buffer zone. "The agreement to a truce was conditional. This did not happen. We resume our military operations against terrorist organizations," said the army statement.

The development comes as Syrian government forces have seized a considerable amount of Western-made weapons and munitions, including American TOW missiles, left behind by terrorist outfits in the southern part of the war-torn Arab country.

Syria's official news agency SANA reported that army troops discovered and seized the weapons, including 23 rapid-firing and automatic anti-aircraft guns, a considerable amount of machine

gun rounds as well as various rifles and rockets.

On June 6, Syrian government forces carried out a string of clean-up operations in the country's southwestern province of Quneitra near the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, discovering a substantial amount of munitions, some of them US-built, from a former stronghold of foreign-backed Takfiri terrorists.

An unnamed military source told SANA that Syrian soldiers launched the operations on the outskirts of the town of Jubata al-Khashab to clear the area of hidden explosive devices and ordnance left behind by the militants.

The source added that the weapons were hidden inside two underground tunnels dug by terrorists, which included artillery rounds, rockets, night-vision devices, American BGM-71 TOW anti-tank missiles as well as various types of machine guns.

It was not the first time Syrian forces discovered ammunition of the sort. Recently, Israeli and U.S.-made weapons left behind by terrorists were found in southern Syria.

Yemeni Houthis Launch Drone Attacks on Saudi Airports, Airbase

SANAA (Dispatches) – Yemeni Houthi Ansarullah forces launched drone attacks on Saudi Arabia's King Khalid airbase and Abha and Najran airports, the Houthis' military spokesman said on Monday.

Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saria said the attack on Abha airport "hit its targets" and air traffic was disrupted at both Abha and Najran. All three locations are in southwest Saudi, near the border with Yemen.

The Houthis, who control the Yemeni capital Sanaa, have in the past few months stepped up their retaliatory attacks against targets in Saudi Arabia.

On Thursday the Houthis said they launched missile and drone attacks on a military parade in the southern port city of Aden, the seat of the former regime

and a stronghold of the coalition, killing dozens.

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 former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi back to power and crushing Ansarullah movement.

The US-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (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 suffer-

ing from extreme levels of hunger.

The leader of the Houthi Ansarullah movement warned the United Arab Emirates against its continued occupation of Yemen, advising the Persian Gulf country to fully pull out its troops from the crisis-hit Arab country.

Addressing his supporters via a televised speech broadcast live from the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, on Sunday afternoon, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi called on Abu Dhabi to cease its occupation of Yemen and to implement withdrawal plans.

Houthi stated that the UAE should pull its military forces out of Yemen, otherwise the situation would become perilous for the country.

An unnamed senior Emirati official told reporters on July

8 that the Persian Gulf country was planning troop draw-down in Yemen in what was claimed to be a shift from a military strategy to a "peace" plan instead.

He added, "We do have troop levels that are down for reasons that are strategic in (the Red Sea city of) Hudaydah and reasons that are tactical" in other parts of the country.

"It has very much to do with moving from what I would call a military first strategy to a peace first strategy, and this is I think what we are doing," the Emirati official said.

In late June, Western diplomatic sources said the UAE was mulling scaling back its military efforts in the war in Yemen to focus on threats posed by the rising US-Iran tensions.

Turkey Wants to Expand Asian Diplomatic Ties

ANKARA (Dispatches) – Turkey wants to expand its diplomatic presence in Asia as the region becomes "the economic center of the world", Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Monday.

"The international community is in a rivalry for greater involvement in Asia as it's becoming the economic center of the world. It is as valuable for us to be a part of Asia as it is for Europe, and standing on these two pillars is what makes us special," Cavusoglu told an ambassadors' conference in Ankara.

President Tayyip Erdogan said last month Turkey would turn elsewhere for fighter jets if the United States does not sell it F-35 planes, adding that a U.S. decision to cut Ankara from the program would not deter it from meeting its needs.

Turkish companies have been closely involved in the program since its inception in 2001 and

the country has invested \$1.4 billion in the development of the fighter jet with NATO allies.

Washington has objected to Turkey buying the Russian S-400 system, saying that operating it alongside the F-35 would compromise the stealth fighter. It said it will not allow F-35s to operate in airspace where the Russian system is active.

"Now our Western friends will say again, 'What's happening, is your foreign policy axis shifting, is Turkey looking for another place to steer away from the West?'" Cavusoglu said.

"So let me ask our Western allies: 'When you approach those places, your foreign policy axis does not shift. When Turkey does the same thing, why do you think its axis shifts?'"

"Essentially, Turkey is the bridge between Europe and Asia, and is the axis itself... There's no need to question that."

Nineteen Dead in Explosion Due to Cairo Car Crash

CAIRO (Reuters) – Nineteen people died and 30 were injured in an explosion resulting from a car crash in central Cairo, Egypt's health ministry said on Monday.

There was no official statement indicating that the explosion was an attack.

The blast happened when a car driving against traffic on Cairo's Nile corniche

road collided with three other cars, the interior ministry said in a separate statement.

It triggered a blaze that forced the partial evacuation of a nearby hospital, National Cancer Institute, the health ministry said.

Shortly after the explosion, blazing cars could be seen in the roadway as passers-

by struggled to help the injured.

Later in the morning, investigators scoured the scene amid a heavy police presence. The hospital building showed apparent damage up to the third floor, a Reuters witness said.

Egypt's public prosecutor is investigating the incident, sources told Reuters.