

Syrian Army Recaptures Two Towns Near Idlib

DAMASCUS (Press TV) – The Syrian army has captured two towns near the terrorists' stronghold of Khan Shaykhun in southern Idlib, reaching the edges of a major bastion of foreign-sponsored terrorists.

In their large-scale advance, the troops captured the small town of Madaya and immediately secured it in order to prevent the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham terrorists from reentering it.

The next target after Madaya was the hill-top town of Tal al-Arjahi, which was briefly contested, but later ended with terrorists fully retreating back toward Khan Shaykhun.

The Syrian army has now put its troops at the northwestern flank of Khan Shaykhun, marking the farthest advance north that the army has made in the Idlib Governorate.

The government troops are working to surround Khan Shaykhun from its western and eastern axes, but the progress of the battle in the east is slow in comparison to the west.

Last Sunday, Syrian fighter jets carried out a string of airstrikes against the positions of foreign-sponsored Takfiri militants in the southern part of Idlib, pounding militant bases in the towns of Khan Shaykhun, al-Tamanah, Hass, Madaya, Kafirsajna, Rakaya Sijneh, and Hazarin as well as Hish.

By Thursday, the ground forces had gained control of five villages to the northwest of Khan Shaykhun.

As the advances continued, Syrian air defense intercepted and destroyed a missile coming from northern Lebanon over the western-central governorate of Hama, state media said.

Quoting an unnamed military source, Syria's official SANA news agency reported that the "hostile" missile was shot down at 23:06 local time (20:06 GMT) on Thursday over the city of Masyaf before reaching its designated target.

The Israeli regime has acknowledged repeatedly striking positions inside Syria in



File photo of Syrian army forces entering the town of Kafr Nabuda, about 40 kilometers north of Hama, on May 11, 2019

recent years, and some of such attacks have been carried out from Lebanese airspace.

Such aggressive moves are usually viewed as attempts to prop up terrorist groups suffering defeats at the hands of Syrian government forces.

In reaction to the massive offensive, a Turkey-backed militant group has reportedly sent reinforcements to the frontlines of Khan Shaykhun.

The British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said on Thursday that the militant group had launched a counterattack on the eastern pincer at the village of Sukeik, and that dozens had been killed in the fighting.

The so-called National Army and National Liberation Front - two terrorist groups that are supported by Turkey - have joined forces to oppose the offensive. The National Army will send more of its fighters to the frontlines to confront the government units, its spokesman said on Thursday.

"It was decided to start sending troops from the National Army starting tomorrow," the group's spokesman Youssef Hamoud said.

Meanwhile, there are unconfirmed reports that a Saudi ringleader of terrorists in Syria has been killed in the Syrian offensive near Khan Shaykhun.

An informed source told Iraq's Buratha news that Abdullah al-Muhaysini, a notorious Saudi member of Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham, has been most probably killed in southern Idlib.

Al-Muhaysini was a cleric known for having served as a religious judge in the so-called Army of Conquest.

Khan Shaykhun lies on a key highway coveted by government troops. The road runs through Idlib, connecting the capital Damascus with the strategic northern city of Aleppo.

Syrian government forces have been regaining control of further areas once held by militants in Idlib province.

Hashd Shaabi Forces Repel Daesh Attack in Eastern Iraq

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – The Hashd Shaabi popular forces have repelled an attack by Daesh terrorists in Iraq's eastern province of Diyala, one dead and three others wounded, a provincial security official said.

The terrorists attacked Hashd Shaabi positions near the town of Khanaqin, some 165 km northeast of the capital Bagh-

dad, Sadiq al-Husseini, head of the security committee of the provincial council, told Xinhua.

There was no immediate report about Daesh terrorists who fled the scene after the arrival of reinforcements, al-Husseini added.

A joint force from the Iraqi army, police and Hashd Shaabi members started a search for the

attackers, he noted.

Despite repeated military operations in Diyala, Daesh remnants were still hiding in rugged areas near the border with Iran, as well as the sprawling areas extending from the western part of Diyala to Himreen mountainous area in the northern part of the province.

The security situation in Iraq

was dramatically improved after Iraqi security forces fully defeated the Daesh terrorists across the country late in 2017.

Daesh remnants, however, have since melted in urban areas or resorted to deserts and rugged areas as safe havens, carrying out hit-and-run attacks against security forces and civilians.

Zionist Troops Kill Palestinian in Alleged Stabbing Attack

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – Zionist troops have shot two Palestinian youths after accusing them of trying to stab them, leaving one of the teens dead at the scene.

Military sources said the Palestinian teens were shot after they attacked the Zionist police with knives in the Old City of al-Quds.

The Palestinian health ministry said one was killed at the scene, with the second left in critical condition at an Israeli hospital.

Zionist police said an officer was moderately wounded in the alleged assault.

The Israeli military regularly opens fatal fire on Palestinians, accusing them of seeking to attack its personnel.

Human rights groups have repeatedly slammed the Tel Aviv regime for

its shoot-to-kill policy as a large number of the Palestinians killed at the scene of attacks did not pose any serious threat.

Zionist troops have on numerous occasions been caught on camera brutally killing Palestinians, with the videos going viral online and sparking worldwide condemnation.

The latest incident comes after Israel's violent attack on the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in the occupied Old City of East al-Quds following Eid al-Adha prayers.

On Sunday, clashes erupted when Israeli police brutally attacked Palestinian worshippers who had gathered at the compound for the first day of the Feast of Sacrifice, which marks the culmination of the annual Hajj pilgrimage.

'Taliban-U.S. Pact in Afghanistan Could Boost Daesh'

KABUL (Dispatches) – A deal between the Taliban and the United States for U.S. forces to withdraw from their longest-ever war in Afghanistan could drive some die-hard Taliban militants into the arms of the Daesh terrorist group, Afghan officials and militants say.

Such a deal is expected to see the United States agree to withdraw its forces in exchange for a Taliban promise they will not let Afghanistan be used to plot international militant attacks.

As part of the pact, the Taliban are expected to make a commitment to power-sharing talks with the U.S.-backed govern-

ment and work out a ceasefire.

The Afghan affiliate of Daesh first appeared in eastern Afghanistan in 2014, and has since made inroads into other areas, particularly the north.

The U.S. military estimates their strength at 2,000 militants. Some Afghan officials estimated the number is higher, and could be about to get a boost.

"It's a big opportunity for Daesh to recruit fighters from the Taliban, and, no doubt, many Taliban fighters will happily join," said Sohrab Qaderi, a member of the provincial council in Nangarhar province on the border with Pakistan.

Daesh terrorists, who battle government forces and the Taliban, and have carried out some of the deadliest attacks in urban centers, will not be part of the deal between the United States and the Taliban.

For some Taliban, Daesh will offer an opportunity to continue the war against those they see as infidels and their supporters. For others, who fear retribution if they try to reintegrate into society, it could be a refuge.

"They've killed and been killed, they have feuds," Qaderi said of the Taliban. "Many fighters won't feel safe returning to normal life."

Disgraceful...

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vessel is refueling and preparing to leave Gibraltar. Washington threatened to impose a visa ban on the crew of the tanker.

"Crew members of vessels assisting the IRGC (Islamic Revolution Guards Corps) by transporting oil from Iran may be ineligible for visas or admission to the United States under the terrorism-related inadmissibility grounds," US State Department spokeswoman Morgan Ortogus said.

"In the case of the M/T Grace 1, we will continue to act consistent with our existing policies concerning those who provide material support to the IRGC," he added.

Many reports, including from Gibraltar, along with later statements from Spain's Spanish Foreign Minister Josep Borrell, have shown that the tanker's seizure had been ordered by Washington.

The tanker seizure took place as the US had pledged to reduce Iran's oil exports to "zero" as part of sanctions that it reinstated after leaving a multilateral 2015 nuclear deal with Iran last year.

Tensions have since further escalated between the two countries, with the U.S. military announcing the deployment of additional military forces to the Middle East, citing unspecified "threats" from Iran.

Several oil tankers have mysteriously been targeted near the Persian Gulf region in the past months, with Washington and its ally Saudi Arabia quickly blaming Iran for the attacks.

Tehran has rejected any involvement, saying the incidents appear to be false flag operations meant to frame the Islamic Republic.

Nonetheless, Washington has used recent developments in the Hormuz Strait to call for the formation of a naval coalition in the Persian Gulf. The appeal has so far been coldly received by its allies.

U.S. ...

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The Trump administration's campaign against Iran has been met with little reception since the United States withdrew in May 2018 from a nuclear accord between Tehran and world powers.

United States sanctions aim to stop Iran from exporting oil and other goods to foreign buyers. But the economic constraints have also irritated American allies and other nations that had sought to open markets in Iran.

The United Arab Emirates and other Arab states are generally careful to avoid appearing too close to the Zionist regime, given longstanding disputes over the rights of Palestinians and access to the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem Al-Quds, one of the holiest sites in Islam.

Goldenberg said it was surprising that Emirati officials would agree to allow the United States into the longstanding and secretive talks with Israel.

"It is a sign they are willing to lean further forward, that they are not as worried about secrecy as they were," said Goldenberg, who worked on regional security issues at the State Department and Pentagon during the Obama administration.

Hezbollah...

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defending Lebanon against the Israeli war defeated the enemy, and Tel Aviv was compelled to withdraw without having achieved any of its objectives.

The Winograd Commission was set by former Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert in September 2006 to examine the events during Israel's 33-day war on Lebanon. It was chaired by retired judge Eliyahu Winograd.

The commission was formed in the wake of public criticism and protest over the fact that the Israeli military had effectively lost the war by failing to achieve its aim of freeing two soldiers captured by Hezbollah fighters.

UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which brokered a ceasefire in the 2006 war, calls on the occupying regime of Israel to respect Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Enemies...

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power, Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami said last Wednesday that the country was planning to unveil a domestically-designed and -manufactured missile defense system later this month.

The missile system will "significantly increase the country's defense capabilities and power," Hatami said, adding that Iran will also put on display a number of other military equipment on National Defense Industry Day.

Iran has made major breakthroughs in its defense sector and attained self-sufficiency in producing military equipment and hardware despite facing sanctions and Western economic pressure.

Iran has designed and manufactured different types of missile systems, including Talash and Bavar-373.

The Islamic Republic says its military power is solely meant for defensive purposes and does not pose any threat to other countries.