

Hamas Says Ready for Palestinian Elections

GAZA (Dispatches) – Islamic Hamas movement, which rules the Gaza Strip, says it is ready to do what is needed in the process of holding the general elections in the Palestinian territories.

Hazem Qassem, Hamas spokesman in Gaza, said in a statement that holding the elections “is a basic right for the Palestinian people and is a due and a must for the Palestinian Authority and its leadership.”

“We expressed our readiness to join the electoral process from the very beginning when President Mahmoud Abbas announced in the United Nations that he intends to call for holding the general elections soon,” said Qassem.

He called on President Abbas to accept the initiative of eight various Palestinian factions and political powers to end the internal division, make reconciliation and hold the general elections in the Palestinian territories.

The initiative will pave the way for holding the presidential and legislative elections and stipulating a date for holding the elections for the Palestinian National Council.

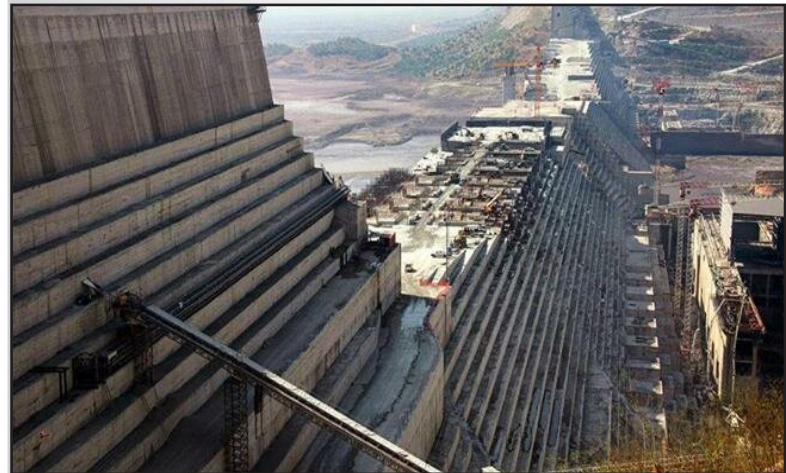
Abbas has designated Hanna Nasser, chief



Hamas supporters chant slogans while raising their hands up during protest against President Donald Trump’s decision to recognize al-Quds as the Zionist regime’s capital, in Jebaliya Refugee Camp, Gaza Strip, Dec. 8, 2017.

of the Palestinian Central Elections Commission, to start contacts with the Palestinian factions and political powers on holding the legislative elections.

‘Egypt Trying to Maintain Colonial Era Grip Over Nile’



Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is seen in this file photo

CAIRO (Reuters) – Ethiopia has accused Egypt of trying to maintain its grip over the waters of the Nile with a proposal it says would imperil a giant hydropower dam under construction on Ethiopia’s Blue Nile, in a growing diplomatic spat.

The comments highlight the difficulties finding a compromise between the two countries over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). Two rounds of talks over the past month in Egypt and Sudan failed to produce progress.

Egypt relies on the Nile for up to

90% of its fresh water, and fears the dam, which is being built in Ethiopia close to the border with Sudan, will restrict already scarce supplies.

After talks had stalled, Egypt had submitted a proposal on Aug. 1, including conditions over filling the reservoir, that Ethiopia rejected.

In an explanation for its decision, Ethiopia said the Egyptian plan was “one-sided”, flawed, and would ultimately hamper its economic development.

“Egypt’s proposal is an effort to maintain a self-claimed colonial era-based water allocation and veto power on any project in the Nile system,” the Foreign Ministry said in an Oct. 1 note circulated to embassies, a copy of which was seen by Reuters.

The Egyptian Foreign Ministry could not be immediately reached for comment.

The \$4 billion dam is designed to be the centerpiece of Ethiopia’s bid to become Africa’s biggest power exporter, generating more than 6,000 megawatts, and is seen by Addis Ababa as a step toward redressing a historic imbalance in the exploitation of the Nile’s waters.

Ethiopia said at the start of the year that the dam should be fully operational by 2022.

Both sides agreed on a five stage process for filling the reservoir behind the dam. Ethiopia says that while it could fill the reservoir in 2-3 years, it made a concession by proposing a 4-7 year process.

Egypt did not mention a time-frame for filling the dam’s reservoir in a diplomatic note last month that acknowledged Ethiopia’s rejection, but said it was requesting that the initial, two-year stage could be extended in conditions of “severe drought”.

Dubai Ruler, Princess Set for Legal Battle in London

LONDON (Reuters) – Jordanian Princess Haya bint al-Hussein, the estranged wife of Dubai’s ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, appeared at the High Court in London on Tuesday in the latest round of a battle over the welfare of their two children.

At a preliminary hearing in July, she had asked the court to protect one of her children from a forced marriage and to grant a non-molestation order, a type of injunction that protects against harassment or threats.

The two parties said in a statement at the time that the legal battle was related to the welfare of their children but did not concern divorce or finances.

A full hearing in the case between the sheikh and Haya, the daughter of

the late King Hussein and half-sister to King Abdullah, will be heard on Nov. 11 and is expected to last five days.

While Haya attended the preliminary hearing, the sheikh was not present in court. He was represented by David Pannick, one of Britain’s top lawyers.

The judge told reporters that they could say Tuesday’s hearing took place but not give any details of the legal arguments.

The 70-year-old sheikh, who is also vice-president of the UAE, married the princess, a former member of the International Olympic Committee, in 2004 in what was believed to be his sixth marriage. He has more than 20 children by different wives.

British Couple Suspected of Joining Daesh in Syria Freed on Bail

LONDON (Dispatches) – A British couple suspected of joining Daesh and fighting for the terrorist group in Syria for four years are now freely living in the UK, reports the Daily Mail.

Details of the case were revealed at the High Court recently, after the pair embarked on a legal challenge to “thwart” an investigation into them spearheaded by Leicester-shire Police.

Currently, the family is living in Leicestershire, after the parents won custody of the children after their brief period in foster care.

Counter-terrorist detectives had tried to obtain statements the pair made to the Family Court in order to win their children back, where it is believed they opened up in greater detail regarding their time in Syria than

when questioned by police.

However, once discovering that police wanted to obtain their statements from the Family Court, the couple mounted a legal challenge at the High Court, before pursuing it via the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court.

The British couple were arrested at Manchester Airport in January on terrorism charges after returning to England with their two children, who were born in Syria.

However, the pair, who are reported to have had at least three electronic devices with them, were released without charge by detectives after giving “no comment” responses during the questioning.

The police were also unable to crack the passwords to the electronic gadgets.

During the court hearings, judges were

told that the man and woman went to Syria separately in 2014, after Daesh declared a “caliphate” on territory captured in northern Syria and Iraq. The two met and got married, giving birth to two children.

British authorities became aware of the family in November 2018 as they fled Syria for Turkey. It was there they were apprehended and placed in an immigration detention centre.

The husband was considered a threat to national security, with the Home Office imposing a Temporary Exclusion Order (TEO) on him last year to prevent him from re-entering Britain.

On 9 January 2019 the family arrived at Manchester airport, where British authorities arrested them, sending the children into care.

Syria... (Continued From Page One)

“We will not hesitate for a moment in defending our people” against Turkish troops, the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) said in a statement.

SDF spokesman Mustafa Bali said warned that “especially in the recently-liberated areas,” Daesh would “seize the opportunity of such an (Turkish) invasion, and it may return to impose their control.”

On Tuesday, a top Kurdish official said Kurds controlling northern Syria may open talks with Damascus and Russia.

“If America vacates the area and especially the border area for certain we, as a self administration and as the SDF, will be forced to study all the available options,” Badran Jia Kurd told Reuters news agency.

“At that time we may hold talks with Damascus or the Russian side to fill the void or block the Turkish attack, so this may develop and there could be meetings and contacts in case of a vacuum,” he added.

Turkey, which considers Kurdish fighters in Syria terrorists and links them to a decades-old insurgency in Turkey, has already launched two major incursions into northern Syria over the past years. The first was in 2016, when Turkey and militants it backs attacked areas west of the Euphrates River. Last year Turkey launched an attack on the Syrian Kurdish enclave of Afrin, leading to the displacement of some 300,000 people.

In Tehran, Iran urged Turkey not to go ahead with its planned an attack on Syrian Kurds. Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif called his Turkish counterpart, Mevlut Cavusoglu, to express Tehran’s opposition to the anticipated Turkish operation. Zarif urged Turkey to respect Syria’s integrity and sovereignty.

Iran’s Foreign Ministry said it has been following “worrying news of the possibility of the Turkish military forces entering Syrian soil and believes that the occurrence of such an action will not only not end Turkey’s security concerns but will lead to widespread material and human damage”.

The ministry also denounced Washington’s “illegitimate” military presence in Syria, saying the decision for the United States to pull its forces out should have been made a long time ago.

In a statement, the Iranian Foreign Ministry expressed hope that Washington’s plan to withdraw its forces from the northern parts of Syria would contribute to the restoration of peace and stability to the Arab country.

Tehran believes the U.S. should have made the decision to “end the occupation of Syrian territories and withdraw its military forces from the country much sooner,” it said.

Russian Government spokesman Dmitry Peskov said it had not been informed about any agreement between Turkey and the U.S.

Peskov told reporters it remained to be seen how many U.S. troops would be withdrawn, and that other details about the plans remained unclear. “We are very closely watching the situation,” he said.

On Monday, he said any foreign military forces “with illegal presence” should leave Syria.

Iran, Turkey and Russia have been working together as part of the so-called Astana group on the Syria war, talks that have run parallel to UN efforts to find a solution to the conflict.

Zionists... (Continued From Page One)

Rock, and further extinguish their aspirations for full rights and a state of their own, with occupied East Al-Quds as its capital.

The Zionist military on Tuesday put the occupied West Bank on complete lockdown in order to pave the way for Israeli extremists to mark Yom Kippur in Jerusalem Al-Quds.

The regime said all crossings into the occupied West Bank and the besieged Gaza Strip will remain closed until Thursday morning.

The occupied Palestinian territories have been the scene of heightened tensions since August 2015, triggered by an Israeli move to impose restrictions on the entry of Palestinian worshippers into the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound.

Jahangiri ... (Continued From Page One)

The enemies thought that by these moves (sanctions), they would lead the Iranian economy into collapse, he said, adding that, however, the Iranian people passed through this difficult era and are “moving toward job creation, production and prosperity”.