

Syria UN Envoy:

Terrorists Continue to Take Civilians as Human Shields in Idlib



Syria's Ambassador to the United Nations Bashar al-Jaafari

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – Syria's Ambassador to the United Nations Bashar al-Jaafari says terrorist groups operating in the northwestern province of Idlib continue to take civilians as human shields, stressing that it is the Damascus government's duty to purge the area of their presence. Speaking at a UN Security Council session on the situation in the Middle East, Jaafari argued that whilst some members of the world body were hindering the efforts being made by the Syrian

government and its allies to fight Daesh and Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, formerly known as al-Nusra Front, terrorist groups, others bragged about an alleged operation that led to the death of Daesh leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and a number of his close aides. The Syrian diplomat highlighted that it lies within the Damascus government's duties to free its citizens from the clutches of terror groups wreaking havoc in Idlib.

Jaafari also criticized the dou-

ble standards being exercised by certain Security Council member states, stating that they portray themselves as heroes for allegedly killing Baghdadi, fill up the United Nations hallways with their shouts and bring about mechanisms against the Syrian government when the latter was about to eliminate Baghdadi and his terrorist group besides Abu Mohammad al-Julani, the founder of Jabhat Fatah al-Sham. "The same countries attacked Syrian army units when they

were in full combat and were trying to get rid of Daesh in Jazira region. Such an incident has happened on al-Tharda Mount near the city of Deir Ezzor and elsewhere in Syria," the Syrian UN ambassador added.

He called on Security Council member states to respect Syria's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity based on the principles of the international law, UN Charter and UN Security Council resolutions on the situation in Syria.

Jaafari also urged the Security Council to "assume its responsibilities in terms of ending the illegal presence of foreign forces on the Syrian soil, and forcing countries that continue to sponsor terrorism and plunder Syria's natural resources, including crude oil, to stop their acts".

On Thursday, Syrian government forces managed to liberate the villages of Luaibdeh Gharbyia and Tal Khazna in Idlib.

Syria's official news agency SANA reported that Syrian army soldiers struck the gatherings and fortifications of militants from the Jabhat Fateh al-Sham with barrages of artillery rounds and rockets.

Several militants fled away towards their strongholds in the countryside of Maarat al-Numan town, located 33 kilometers (20.52 miles) South of Idlib.

Yellow... (Continued From Page One)

on Saturday said: "December 5. Early retirement for Macron."

France has a long tradition of violent protest, but the ferocity of last winter's demonstrations and allegations of police brutality shocked the country.

Officials said the magnitude of the weekend protests is far from certain but deputy interior minister Laurent Nunez noted a "more pronounced interest" than in previous weeks, and police would plan their deployment accordingly.

A poll by the Elabe institute published Wednesday said 55 percent of French people support or have sympathy for the yellow vests.

Massacre... (Continued From Page One)

opposition official in the Senate, proclaimed herself president, saying every person in the line of succession ahead of her—all of them Morales backers—had resigned. The Constitutional Court issued a statement backing her claim that she didn't need to be confirmed by Congress, a body controlled by Morales' Movement Toward Socialism party.

Morales had upended politics in this nation long ruled by light-skinned descendants of Europeans by reversing deep-rooted inequality. The economy benefited from a boom in prices of commodities and he ushered through a new constitution that created a new Congress with seats reserved for Bolivia's smaller indigenous groups while also allowing self-rule for all indigenous communities.

The United Nations warned on Saturday violence in Bolivia could "spin out of control".

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet warned escalating violence could usurp the democratic process.

"I am concerned that the situation in Bolivia could spin out of control if the authorities do not handle it ... with full respect for human rights," Bachelet said in a statement.

"Repressive actions by the authorities ... are likely to jeopardize any possible avenue for dialogue," she added.

Cochabamba regional ombudsman Nelson Cox said hospital records in the coca farming region showed the "vast majority" of Friday's deaths and injuries were caused by bullet wounds.

"We are working with the national ombudsman's office to conduct autopsies ... and seek justice for these victims," Cox told Reuters.

Though the capital La Paz was calm Saturday, highway blockades prompted panic on the streets, with many rushing to hoard groceries as supplies ran low and prices rose.

Bolivia's national ombudsman said Friday that total deaths had hit 19 since the Oct. 20 election, a number which has accelerated over the last week.

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their opposition to the Islamic Republic by blocking streets or attacking a number of buildings," the prosecutor general noted, saying the disruptive conduct has its roots in foreign countries.

Hostile currents have been using the social media in recent days to instigate unrest, he said. "Such

measures and conducts that disrupt public order are considered a crime under the law, and the law enforcement forces and the judicial system feel duty-bound to take legal action against the people disrupting the public order."

U.S.... (Continued From Page One)

Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain said this week they would compete in regional soccer tournament in Qatar despite a boycott they have imposed on Doha.

"Certainly I am hopeful," Goldfein told Reuters in Dubai when asked if he thought the rift could soon be resolved. "It's certainly in our best interest to see if they can come to a political solution."

Washington has unsuccessfully tried to mediate the dispute, in which the four nations have severed political, trade and transport ties with Qatar since mid-2017 over accusations it supports terrorism.

Doha denies the charge and says the embargo aims to impinge on its sovereignty.

The United States is allied to all six Persian Gulf Arab states. Qatar hosts Al-Udeid air base, the largest U.S. military facility in the region, while Bahrain is home to the Navy's Fifth Fleet.

Goldfein earlier pressed the Persian Gulf states to resolve their differences and work together against Iran.

"When a missile or a UAV (drone) is en route from Iran that is not the time to reconcile past grievances. That time is now. Today," he said at an air chiefs conference.

The United States blames Iran for a series of suspicious attacks in the Persian Gulf over the summer, including the Sept. 14 missile and drone attack on Saudi Arabia that temporarily shut down half the kingdom's oil production. Tehran denies involvement.

"No one country has everything it needs to defend itself but together we have exactly what we need for collective defense," Goldfein said.

"We have the power to begin this right now as we face a common adversary who seems committed to malign behavior across the region."

Persian Gulf military chiefs last month called for unified efforts between their armed forces following the Yemeni attack on Saudi Arabia.

Emphasizing the principle of collective security, Goldfein said the best chance to defend the UAE could be from Qatar or neighboring Oman.

"Neighbors to the right and to the left who by geometry-alone have a better shot," he said.

Zarif... (Continued From Page 2)

work with Iran on developing the port but New Delhi shouldn't see Beijing's interest as representing "competition."

While Zarif rejected use of the word "alliance", he said U.S. economic and political actions had created "an understanding" between China, Russia and Iran "that we're all (U.S.) targets" and there was "a commonality being felt" by the leaderships of the three countries.

He said India could also one day be a U.S. target "but for the time-being Trump needs (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi's votes in Texas."

Turkey Says Bought Russian S-400s to Use Them, Not Put Them Aside

ANKARA (Dispatches) – Turkey bought S-400 missile systems from Russia to use them, not put them aside, the head of the Turkish Defense Industry Directorate says, after talks between President Tayyip Erdogan and U.S. President Donald Trump.

Erdogan and Trump held talks in Washington on Wednesday to overcome increasing differences between the NATO allies, ranging from Syria policy to sanctions threats over Turkey's purchase of the S-400s, which Washington says pose a threat to its Lockheed Martin F-35 fighter jets.

Washington has warned that Ankara will face sanctions over its purchase of the S-400s, and has suspended Turkey from the F-35 program, in which it was a customer and manufacturer. It has yet to impose any sanctions on Turkey, which began receiving the Russian systems in July.

In an interview with broadcaster CNN Turk, Ismail Demir said it was not logical for any country to purchase such systems only to put them aside, and added that Ankara and Washington aimed to tackle the issue.

"It is not a correct approach to say 'we won't use them for

their sake' about a system that we bought out of necessity and paid so much money for," Demir said. "We have allied relations with Russia and the United States. We have to go on and respect the agreements we signed," he said.

On Wednesday, Trump urged Erdogan at the White House to drop the S-400 systems, but Erdogan later said Ankara could not harm its relations with Russia. He reiterated Turkey's desire to buy U.S. Patriot in addition to the S-400s.

A top aide to Erdogan said on Friday that Turkish and U.S.

officials had begun working as part of a joint mechanism aiming to evaluate the impact of the S-400s on the F-35s.

Demir said the move showed an easing in the position of the United States, and added that Turkey was ready to take measures that will address U.S. concerns over the S-400s after the talks.

Demir also said Turkish personnel were continuing their training on the S-400s in Russia, but added that there would be no Russian personnel coming to Turkey to operate the systems.

UN Resolution Urges Zionist Regime to Pay Lebanon \$850mn Over Oil Spill

NEW YORK (Dispatches) – The United Nations General Assembly Second Committee has overwhelmingly approved a draft resolution that urges the Zionist regime to pay Lebanon over \$850 million in compensation for a major oil spill during the regime's 2006 war on the Arab country.

The committee passed the draft titled "Oil slick on Lebanese shores" in a recorded vote of 158 in favor and 9 against, with 6 abstentions.

The motion, submitted by Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 developing countries and China, called on the regime to assume responsibility and promptly compensate Lebanon and Syria for damage and the costs of repairing the environmental disaster caused by the regime's bombing of the Jiyeh power station south of Beirut in mid-July, 2006.

Damaged tanks at the power plant leaked up to 30,000 tons of oil into the eastern Mediterranean Sea. A 10-kilometer-wide oil slick also covered the entire Lebanese coastline and parts of the Syrian shore and threatened Turkey and Cyprus.

Speaking after the vote, Lebanon's representative to the assembly

said the approval of the resolution affirmed the international community's will to uphold international law and the UN Charter.

The resolution directed Israel to respond with prompt and adequate compensation to the affected countries.

It further requires Lebanon to continue to mobilize resources and legal means to ensure that the compensation is paid in full.

The compensation was estimated at \$856.4 million in 2014, but Lebanon reserves the right to accrue interest after that date.

The Zionist regime launched two wars on Lebanon in 2000 and 2006, in both of which the Hezbollah resistance movement inflicted heavy losses on the regime's military. Zionist regime officials have even threatened a third war on the country.

The regime and Lebanon have further been engaged in a maritime dispute over oil and gas exploration in the eastern Mediterranean.

There is also another rift between the two sides over Israel's occupation of Shebaa Farms, a small strip of land at the intersection of the Lebanese-Syrian border and the Golan Heights.

241 Daesh Terrorists Surrender in Afghanistan's Nangarhar

JALALABAD (Dispatches) – A total of 241 terrorists and supporters of Daesh terrorists group including men, women and children have surrendered to the government in Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar province, said an army statement.

"A total of 241 Daesh members and loyalists including 71 men, 63 women and 107

children have surrendered to local authorities in Achin and Mohman Dara districts over the past three days," said the statement.

The former militants have also handed over 67 pieces of weapons to the security forces, the statement said.

This is the largest number of the militants

affiliated with the Daesh outfit to lay down arms and surrender to security forces in the eastern region over the past couple of years, officials said.

The Daesh group, which is active in Nangarhar and the neighboring Kunar and Nuristan provinces, have yet to make comment on the report.