

BEIRUT (Press TV) – Hezbollah Deputy Secretary General Sheikh Naim Qassem says the United States and the Zionist regime do not dare attack the Lebanese resistance movement since they are aware that the group's firm determination to respond to any act on aggression will never change. Sheikh Qassem stressed that Hezbollah intends to remain in a defensive position and does not want to initiate a war. "Israel must understand that the battleground is not open for it," he said, adding that any future battle will be taken to the depth of the Israeli-occupied territories.

He who is deserted by friends and relatives will often find help and sympathy from strangers.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

Yemeni Drones Attack Air Base, Airport in Saudi Arabia: Military

SANA'A (Press TV) – Yemeni armed forces, backed by allied fighters from Popular Committees, have launched fresh retaliatory attacks against Saudi Arabia, targeting Abha International Airport and King Khalid Air Base in southwestern region of Asir.

Spokesman for Yemeni Armed Forces, Brigadier General Yahya Saree, said in a post published on his Twitter page that three domestically-manufactured Sammad-3 (Invincible-3) and Qasef-2K (Striker-2K) combat drones struck designated targets inside the sites with great precision early on Friday.

He added that the airstrikes come within Yemen's legitimate right to respond to the Saudi devastating war and all-out blockade against Yemeni people.

The latest drone strikes came a few hours after the Yemeni army forces and allies launched a ballistic missile at the southwestern Saudi port city of Jizana.

The Saudi-led coalition said it had intercepted and destroyed the missile.

On Thursday, Yemen's military said it launched a missile attack against Saudi Arabia's Aramco oil facility in the kingdom's Red Sea city of Jeddah.

Saree said on Twitter that a Quds-2 cruise missile had hit the economically strategic site and the



A worker is inspecting the damage at Abha airport in Saudi Arabia, one day after a missile attack by Yemeni armed forces and their allied fighters from Popular Committees.

strike was accurate.

The senior Yemeni military official noted that the missile attack was in retaliation for a six-year military campaign led by Saudi Arabia in Yemen.

At least two civilians were killed and ten others injured when artillery shelling targeted an area in Yemen's southern coastal province of Ta'izz.

A local security source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Saudi-led militants carried out heavy artillery shelling on al-Jumlah area in the Salh district of the province on Thursday evening.

Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, a

member of Yemen's Supreme Political Council, has extended an invitation to Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to visit Sana'a and obtain a more detailed understanding of Yemen's humanitarian crisis.

"We invite the Russian foreign minister, who plans to undertake a regional tour between March 8 and 12, to visit Sana'a to learn about security and stability [here in Yemen]," he wrote on Twitter on Thursday.

Lavrov will visit the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Qatar on March 8-12 to discuss coordina-

tion on energy markets, the Interfax news agency reported on Thursday.

The Yemeni official called on Lavrov to reopen the Russian embassy in Sana'a instead of visiting the Saudi capital Riyadh, in order to acquire an in-depth understanding of the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Yemen as a result of the aggression being waged by the Saudi Arabia, United States, Britain, the United Arab Emirates and their allies.

The United Nations says Yemen has the world's largest humanitarian crisis, with 80 percent of the country's 30 million people needing some form of aid or protection. About 13.5 million Yemenis currently face acute food insecurity, UN data shows.

Last month, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock said some 16 million people in Yemen were going hungry and five million of those people were "just one step away from famine."

Some 400,000 children under the age of five are severely malnourished, he said.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched the war on Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the government of former president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, back to power and crushing the popular Ansarullah movement.

Rights Groups Urge U.S. to Address Rights Crises Among Persian Gulf Allies



A group of 15 rights groups urged the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden to address the deterioration of human rights U.S. allies in the Persian Gulf, especially in Bahrain.

MANAMA (Dispatches) – A group of 15 rights groups urged the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden to address the deterioration of human rights U.S. allies in the Persian Gulf by adopting a rights-based foreign policy.

The group, which includes the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD), Amnesty International, Reprieve, and the World Organization Against Torture, wrote in a letter to U.S. State Secretary Antony Blinken on Wednesday that "Last December, you noted that '[i]n too many countries, people are imprisoned and face torture or death for speaking their minds, reporting the news, or demanding their rights.' This statement sadly reflects the situation in Bahrain over the last four years".

The letter points to human rights activists Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, Nabeel Rajab and Ebtisam al-Saegh, who have been detained in Bahrain for their activism.

"The Biden administration should urge Bahrain to rescind restrictions on civil society, take genuine steps towards justice reform and the restoration

of civil rights and reinstate restrictions on arms sales to Bahrain pending an improvement in the country's rights record."

Bahrain has engaged in a widespread crackdown since 2011, when the country's royal family faced nationwide protests calling for its removal.

Biden's predecessor Donald Trump would enhance its relations with some of the countries, most notably Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain, in sheer disregard for their human rights abuses.

The rights group said that Bahrain's rulers had been "emboldened" by the former U.S. president's public disdain for international human rights norms.

"The advent of the Trump administration in 2017 heralded an unprecedented government crackdown in Bahrain which continues to this day," the groups said.

The Persian Gulf's litany of human rights abuses, however, goes back as far as 2011, when it came down hard on a popular uprising against the ruling Al Khalifah regime.

Scores have been killed and hundreds others jailed during the campaign of suppression against the peaceful rallies.

U.S. Emboldens Terrorist Groups in Syria: Moscow, Damascus

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – The United States and its allies revitalize and boost terrorist activities in Syria, Mikhail Mizintsev, head of Russia's National Center for State Defense Control, and Hussein Makhlof, Syria's Minister of Local Administration and Environment, said in a joint statement issued on Thursday.

Terrorists regularly conduct attacks on state structures, humanitarian convoys, and mass gatherings of citizens in the war-torn country.

"In violation of international law and the UN Charter, the Americans launch airstrikes on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic, occupy large areas of the country and openly support illegal armed groups, thereby stimulating the growth of terrorist activity," the statement read.

The statement notes that terrorists have been particularly active

on territories that are not controlled by Damascus, as extremists from Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham ambush attack on the departments of government security agencies and state institutions in the country's south.

Central Syria is regularly rocked by attacks of Daesh terrorists on humanitarian convoys and social infrastructure facilities. Besides, terrorists often use improvised explosive devices to commit terror acts in places of mass gatherings of civilians, the statement read.

Meanwhile, Russia ripped Western countries for their continued use of Syria's so-called chemical file to exert more pressure on the war-ravaged Arab country, despite the fact that the Damascus government has completely and irreversibly dismantled its chemical weapons production facilities and stockpiles.

"Syria joined the Organization for

the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) voluntarily, with encouragement from Russia, implemented basic conditions under the Chemical Weapons Convention and got rid of its entire chemical weapons arsenal," Russia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Vasily Nebenzya said at a virtual session of the UN Security Council on Thursday.

He added, "In 2014, Syria completely abandoned its chemical weapons program, destroyed all its chemical warfare stockpiles and destroyed its chemical-weapons production facilities – something confirmed by the OPCW more than once."

The Russian diplomat noted that some countries are repeatedly using the chemical weapons "card" as a tool to pressure the Syrian government, using grave accusations "backed up by unconvincing evi-

dence like video footage on social media or testimony of knowingly biased witnesses, or falsified facts."

He said, "they reject the counter-arguments provided not only by Russia and Syria, but also by independent experts and organizations, and do not give any coherent explanation as to why they do so."

Nebenzya also said that the OPCW and its technical experts have become the "transmitter of anti-Syrian claims of the Western countries."

"The root cause of the problem is that our Western colleagues have long turned Syria's chemical file into a means of punishment of the unwanted authorities in Damascus," the Russian UN ambassador said.

"Therefore, attempts to establish the connection between the file and actual use or non-use of chemical weapons are absolutely senseless," Nebenzya pointed out.

Seven Shias, Female Doctor Killed in Afghanistan

JALALABAD (Dispatches) – A female doctor was killed in a bomb blast in the eastern Afghan city of Jalalabad and at least seven Shia civilians were shot and killed by a group of gunmen overnight in the country's east, provincial officials said on Thursday.

Juma Gul Hemat, the provincial police chief in Nangarhar, said the victims of the shooting incident were workers at a plaster factory in the Sorkh Rod district. Police arrested four suspects, he added.

The laborers were all from Afghanistan's minority Shia Hazara community, according to Farid Khan, a spokesman for the provincial police chief. Some had come from the capital Kabul, as well as central Bamyan and northern Balkh provinces, to work in the factory.

Ajmal Omar, a member of Nangarhar provincial council member, said on Thursday that the migrant Hazara laborers had their hands bound behind their backs and been shot to death late Wednesday.

The deadly incident took place almost 20 kilometers

from the eastern city of Jalalabad near the Pakistan border, an area where a large number of militants are believed to have influence, including the Taliban militant group and a local affiliate of the Daesh group.

The Hazara community on both sides of the border has suffered decades of persecution and attacks by violent militant groups operating across the troubled region.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for that attack, but Daesh terrorists have declared war on the Shia and frequently single out the Hazaras.

Meanwhile, a doctor was killed after a magnetic bomb attached to the vehicle she was travelling in exploded, according to a spokesman from the governor's office in the eastern Nangarhar province.

"She was commuting in a rickshaw when the bomb went off," the spokesman told the AFP news agency.

The doctor was on her way to work at a provincial hospital's maternity ward. A child was also injured by the explosion.

Another spokesman from the provincial hospital also

confirmed the incident and the numbers of dead and injured people.

The act of aggression came two days after three female media workers who worked at a private TV station were gunned down in Jalalabad in separate shooting incidents that were just minutes apart.

In another incident in the country, at least 14 people were killed after an avalanche hit a gold mine in a remote area of northern Afghanistan controlled by the Taliban, officials said Friday.

Farid Nekfar, who heads the disaster management department of Afghanistan's Badakhshan province, said efforts were ongoing to recover at least two bodies after the avalanche on Thursday afternoon.

"We are in contact with the locals and emergency teams. So far 12 dead bodies have been recovered from under the avalanche," Nekfar told AFP. "Unfortunately the area is under the control of the insurgents."

Nek Mohammad Nazari, a spokesman for Badakhshan's governor, gave a slightly higher toll, saying 15 people had been killed.

Biden Administration Slammed for Rebuking ICC

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – After denouncing the International Criminal Court's probe into the Zionist regime's war crimes in the occupied Palestinian territories, U.S. Department of State spokesman Ned Price struggled to answer a question over where Palestinians should seek accountability for abuses carried out by the Zionist regime.

"The United States is always going to stand up for human rights," Price claimed at a media briefing, before pivoting to a familiar declaration of Washington's support for the so-called "two-state solution".

Unsatisfied with the answer, Associated Press correspondent Matthew Lee kept asking while Price was delivering the generic lines: "Where do they go? Where? Where? Do they go to the Israeli courts? Where do they go? Where. Do. They. Go?"

The query went unanswered as Price moved on to another subject.

The question, rights advocates say, is of tremendous importance. The new U.S. administration has condemned all measures of Palestinian resistance, including the peaceful Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement as well as efforts to secure justice at international forums including the ICC and the United Nations.

Jonathan Kuttub, a Palestinian-American lawyer specializing in international law, said the administration was not merely questioning the methods Palestinians were using to fight for their rights; it was implying that Palestinians don't have any rights at all.

Amnesty International praised the ICC's decision to open a war crimes investigation against the occupying

regime as a momentous breakthrough. Head of Amnesty International's Center for International Justice, Matthew Cannock, said that announcement by ICC chief prosecutor Fatou Bensouda that she is opening a full war crimes probe "is a momentous breakthrough for justice after decades of non-accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity."

He added, "The ICC investigation provides the first genuine prospect for thousands of victims of crimes under international law to gain long overdue access to justice, truth and reparations. It also offers a historic opportunity to finally put an end to the pervasive impunity that has driven serious violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) for more than half a century."

The Palestinian Authority (PA) as well as Hamas resistance movement also welcomed the prosecutor's announcement.

Zionist prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, accusing the court of anti-Semitism, described its decision to launch an investigation as "outrageous," telling Fox News, "I am going to fight this in every place."

U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris, in a call with Netanyahu reaffirmed Washington's opposition to the investigation, the White House said.

The call was the first between the two since Harris and Biden took office in January.

Bensouda has identified the Israeli military's use of lethal and non-lethal force against Palestinians demonstrating near the fence separating the Gaza Strip from the occupied territories after 2018 as one possible focus of the investigation.