

KABUL (Xinhua) – Three family members of a slain journalist have been killed in a shooting by unknown men in Afghanistan's western Ghor province, an independent war monitoring group reported Saturday. On Jan. 1, Bismillah Adil Aimaq, head of a local radio station, lost his life in an attack along a road in the city of Firoz Koah, capital of Ghor. Militants broke into his parents' house in Firoz Koah on Thursday night, Reduction in Violence (RiV) group reported on its website.

He who is greedy is disgraced; he who discloses his hardship will always be humiliated; he who has no control over his tongue will often have to face discomfort.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

Yemen's Ma'rib Inching Closer to Liberation

SANA'A (Dispatches) – More major Yemeni tribes have made non-aggression deals with the Yemeni army troops and allies as they are advancing in the strategic central province of Ma'rib.

Elders from Ubaidah, Murad, Jahm and Jadaan tribes took the decision as the Yemeni armed forces and allied fighters from Popular Committees are pulling the plug on Saudi mercenaries loyal to Yemen's former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur in Ma'rib, Lebanese Arabic-language al-Akhabar newspaper, citing local sources, reported.

A number of senior sheikhs from Ma'rib, whose tribes have struck peace deals with Yemen's Sana'a-based National Salvation Government, held a meeting in the capital and stressed the need for the liberation of the region.

"Yemeni people are utterly resolute to liberate Ma'rib, no matter how loudly the Saudi-Emirati alliance would cry foul. The liberation of Ma'rib will be achieved by its local residents. Those fighting within the ranks of [the al-Qaeda-affiliated Salafist] Islah Party must renounce violence," Sheikh Najj al-Masri from Jahm tribe said.

Over the past few weeks, Ma'rib has been the scene of large-scale operations by Yemeni troops and allied Popular Committees fighters, who are pushing against Saudi-backed militants loyal to former



Yemeni army forces and their allies during an operation to liberate areas in the country's central provinces of al-Bayda and Ma'rib.

president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi. Yemeni Information Minister Dhaifallah al-Shami has said the liberation of Ma'rib would mark the end of the Saudi-led aggression.

The Yemeni government says it will not accept disingenuous attempts at peace, urging the United States and Britain to drop their support for the Saudi-led coalition waging war on Yemen before encouraging an end to the war.

Addressing the participants in a rally against the Saudi-led war on and siege of Yemen in the capital, Sana'a, on Friday, Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, a member of Yemen's Supreme Political Council, stressed that the Yemeni people would continue to defend their "homeland and dignity."

On the battle of Ma'rib, he stressed that the people of the province were loyal to the Sana'a government.

"Saudi Arabia has to defend itself within its borders and not in Ma'rib," al-Houthi said.

He stressed that the U.S. and Britain must stop their military support for the Saudi-led coalition of aggressors for the sake of peace in Yemen.

"If [U.S. President Joe] Biden wants peace, he should withdraw his experts who are leading the battle in Ma'rib, and the British should stop arming the planes that are targeting our children in Ma'rib and on various fronts," al-Houthi said.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies, including the Unit-

ed Arab Emirates (UAE), launched the brutal war against Yemen in March 2015.

The war was meant to eliminate Yemen's Ansarullah movement and restore the former Riyadh-backed regime of Hadi to power.

The U.S.-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), a nonprofit conflict-research organization, estimates that the war has claimed more than 100,000 lives.

In another development, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has sent another batch of military equipment to separatist militias on the Yemeni island of Socotra, a local governor has revealed.

Socotra Governor Ramzi Mahrous on Thursday posted on Facebook that an Emirati ship unloaded military vehicles at Socotra port "in a clear attempt to obstruct the implementation of the Riyadh Agreement."

Emirati-backed Southern Transitional Council (STC) militants took control of Socotra Island's capital Hadiboh last June, expelling from it the municipal authority's leadership, following clashes with Saudi-backed forces.

The UAE has long had its sights set on Socotra island, seeking to establish a military presence there to bolster its sphere of influence along the Gulf of Aden and Bab El-Mandeb Strait.

Palestine Blasts 'Foggy' U.S. Position



Palestinians take part in a demonstration against a plan by the Zionist regime to annex huge parts of the occupied West Bank, in Gaza City, Gaza Strip on June 29, 2020.

RAMALLAH (Dispatches) – Palestine on Saturday lashed out at U.S. position towards the Zionist-Palestinian conflict, calling it a "foggy" position.

"The U.S. foggy position encourages Israel to escalate its settlement policy," the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) said in a statement.

"Israel exploits the U.S. position to implement what had been already agreed upon between the former U.S. administration and Israel concerning settlement," the statement said, referring to the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim in the West Bank overlooking the E1 area.

The E1 area is an area of the West Bank within the municipal boundary of the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim. It is located adjacent to and northeast of East al-Quds and to the west of Ma'ale Adumim.

"The current administration is not putting the issue of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the top of its priorities," the PLO statement said. It said Zionist prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu last week instructed the start of implementing the settlement project in E1 area "to establish a new status quo on the ground."

"The settlement project in E1 area is part of the actual Israeli annexation plan of large parts of the West Bank," it added.

Meanwhile, the United Nations and European members of the Security Council on Friday called on

the occupying regime to stop demolitions of Bedouin settlements in the Jordan Valley, and for humanitarian access to the community living in Humsa Al-Baqiaia.

In a joint statement at the end of a monthly session of the Security Council on the conflict in the Middle East, Estonia, France, Ireland, Norway and the United Kingdom said they were "deeply concerned at the recent repeated demolitions and confiscation of items, including of EU- and donor-funded structures carried out by Israeli authorities at Humsa Al-Baqiaia in the Jordan Valley."

It said the concern was also focused on the 70 people or so living in the Bedouin community, including 41 children.

"We reiterate our call on Israel to halt demolitions and confiscations," the statement said.

"We further call on Israel to allow full, sustained and unimpeded humanitarian access to the community in Humsa Al-Baqiaia."

Humsa al-Baqia sits in the Jordan Valley, a fertile and strategic patch of land that runs from Lake Tiberias to the Dead Sea, which has emerged as a flashpoint in the struggle over the West Bank.

The Jordan Valley is home to approximately 60,000 Palestinians, according to the UN, but nearly 90 percent of the land is part of what is known as Area C, the three-fifths of the West Bank that is under complete Zionist regime occupation.

Iraqi PM Urges Calm After Protests

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi on Saturday called for calm in the southern Dhi Qar province following days of protests that killed five and injured dozens.

On Friday, Governor Nazim al-Waili resigned after the demonstrations in the provincial capital Nasiriyah. Abdul Ghani al-Asadi, the head of the National Security Service, was named as a new governor.

In a statement, al-Kadhimi's media office said the appoint-

ment of a new governor, the formation of an advisory council and launching an investigation into the deadly protests "mark a major campaign to rebuild the province".

The Iraqi premier called for calm in the province "to give sufficient opportunity to the new administration to carry out its tasks in the service of the city's people".

Cautious calm prevailed in the province on Saturday, amid tight security measures,

according to eyewitnesses.

Home to more than two million people, Dhi Qar province has been a hotbed for demonstrations in Iraq that began in October 2019 to protest unemployment, and lack of public services.

The clashes continued on Friday evening after a week of violence that erupted on Sunday when security forces fired to disperse protesters, who were trying to storm the provincial government building using rocks and Molotov

cocktails.

Protesters were demanding the removal of the governor and justice for protesters killed since 2019.

Iraq's biggest protests in decades broke out in October 2019 and continued for months, with hundreds of thousands of Iraqis demanding jobs and services.

Prime Minister al-Kadhimi, who took office in May 2020, has pledged justice for activists killed or abused by armed groups.

UK Urged to Repatriate Daesh Bride From Syria

LONDON (Dispatches) – Britain risks creating "a new Guantanamo" by leaving Shamima Begum and others like her stranded in detention camps in Syria, it has been claimed, after the supreme court rejected Begum's appeal against a decision to revoke her UK citizenship.

A key figure who has been involved with Begum's case said the judgment left the 21-year-old in a legal limbo, unable to return to the UK or mount an effective challenge to the deprivation decision remotely.

Maya Foa, the director of the human rights charity Reprieve, said the supreme court had said Begum could in theory still challenge a decision to take away her citizenship, if she could find a way of instructing her lawyers.

"The court has said she can appeal [against] the citizenship decision, but they do not say how it can be done. It leaves her in the hands of the British government, which is unwilling to assist. That is less of a policy and more of an abdication of responsibility – unless the policy is to create a new Guantanamo in Syria," Foa said.

Begum is understood to have been told of the court judgment, although very little of her personal story featured during the case. Supporters say she regrets her decision to leave the UK and is remorseful about her actions.

They argue that she was a minor when she was a victim of trafficking and was unable to leave Syria after she arrived in 2015, until she was detained by militants as the last of Daesh

terrorist group's territory was captured.

Her legal team has yet to decide what it might do next, including whether it will appeal to the European court of human rights.

An estimated 24 adults and 35 children who left Britain to join Daesh are still detained by militants in Syria at one of several camps run by Kurds, where conditions have been described as dire. Many of them have had their UK citizenship removed.

On Friday the supreme court decided unanimously to rule in favour of the home secretary and against Begum on all counts, in the latest stage of a long-running legal battle.

It means the 21-year-old will not be allowed to re-enter the UK to fight her case in person and cannot have her citizenship restored.

Coronavirus Cases, Deaths Rise in Arab Countries

AMMAN (MEMO) – Jordan, Libya, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Iraq and Palestine announced new coronavirus infections and fatalities as efforts continue to contain the deadly virus, Anadolu Agency reports.

The Jordanian Health Ministry announced Friday 3,644 more cases, bringing the number of infections to 383,912.

A total of 343,840 people have recovered from the disease so far. The death toll rose by 23 to 4,650.

Libya reported 18 deaths, 625 new cases and 701 recoveries. The new total is 2,174 fatalities, 132,458 infections and 119,492 recoveries.

Sixteen more people died in the UAE, bringing the death toll to 1,198. As many as 3,498 new cases were identified, pushing the total to 385,160.

Fourteen people died in Iraq

on Friday, pushing nationwide fatalities to 13,365.

With 4,336 new infections, the caseload rose to 688,698. A total of 630,178 recoveries have been recorded.

The Palestinian Health Ministry said 11 additional patients died in the last 24 hours and 2,227 fatalities have been recorded.

The ministry added that 1,555 people were infected, bringing the tally to 204,815. A total of 186,992 people have recovered from the virus so far.

The pandemic has claimed more than 2.5 million lives in 192 countries and regions since December 2019.

More than 113.2 million cases have been reported worldwide, with an excess of 63 million recoveries, according to figures compiled by U.S.-based Johns Hopkins University.