

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – The Palestinian Authority has rejected an aid shipment from the United Arab Emirates, according to the Palestinian health minister. In a news conference, Mai Kaila said her country refused to receive the medical aid as the Emirati side ignored to coordinate with them. "The UAE has not coordinated with us regarding the medical aid, and we reject to receive it without coordination," said the minister. "We are a sovereign country, and they should have coordinated with us first." Maan News Agency said citing informed sources the decision came as the aid arrived at the Zionist regime's Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv.

Sons of Murdered Saudi Journalist Khashoggi 'Forgive' Killers

RIYADH (Dispatches) – The sons of murdered Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi said Friday they 'forgive' the killers of their father, an announcement analysts said effectively grants clemency to five convicted people on death row.

Khashoggi -- a royal family insider turned critic -- was killed and dismembered at the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul in October 2018, in a case that tarnished the reputation of de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

His family's pardon could spare the lives of five unnamed people sentenced to death over the murder in a December court ruling that exonerated two top aides to the crown prince.

"On this holy night of this blessed month (of Ramadan)... we the sons of martyr Jamal Khashoggi announce we forgive and pardon those who killed our father," the Washington Post columnist's son Salah Khashoggi said on Twitter.

Saudi authorities did not immediately comment on the legal ramifications of the announcement from



Some Western governments, as well as the CIA, accused Mohammed bin Salman of ordering the killing. A year after the murder the crown prince accepted responsibility, saying "it happened under my watch."

Salah, who resides in the kingdom and has denied reports of a financial settlement with the government.

"What this essentially means is that the killers will avoid capital punishment since that is a right the family (under sharia law) has to forgive," Ali Shihabi, a Saudi author and analyst close to the government said on Twitter.

"Other legal procedures by the state continue."

The Saudi court which issued the five death sentences in December said the killing was not premeditated, a ruling which backed assertions by Saudi officials but which contradicted the findings of a UN-led inquiry into Khashoggi's killing.

However, Khashoggi's fiancée Hatice Cengiz said on Friday that no one could pardon his killers. "Nobody has the right to pardon the killers. We will not pardon the killers nor those who ordered the killing," she said in a tweet.

Khashoggi was last seen at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on Oct. 2, 2018, where he had gone to obtain documents for his impending wedding. His body was reportedly dismembered and removed from the building, and his remains have not been found.

Some Western governments, as well as the CIA, accused bin Salman of ordering the killing, an accusation that was initially rejected by Saudi officials. A year after the murder the crown prince accepted responsibility, saying "it happened under my watch."

While 31 were suspects linked to the killing, only 11 were put on trial in the capital city of Riyadh behind closed doors. Based on the court ruling five people were sentenced to death, three to jail and the remaining three were exonerated.

Yemen's Health System 'Has in Effect Collapsed': UN



The file photo shows patients at a hospital in Yemen's Red Sea port city of Hodeidah.

GENEVA (Dispatches) – The new coronavirus is believed to be spreading throughout Yemen where the health care system 'has in effect collapsed', the United Nations said on Friday, appealing for urgent funding.

"Aid agencies in Yemen are operating on the basis that community transmission is taking place across the country," Jens Laerke, spokesman for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), told a Geneva briefing.

"We hear from many of them that Yemen is really on the brink right now. The situation is extremely alarming, they are talking about that the health system has in effect collapsed," he said.

Aid workers report having to turn people away because they do not have enough medical oxygen or sufficient supplies of personal protective equipment, Laerke said.

A flight carrying international aid workers landed in Aden on Thursday as air space opened up for rotations, but Yemeni nationals have been doing most of the on-site work, he said.

The main coronavirus treatment centre in southern Yemen has recorded at least 68 deaths in just over two weeks, Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders), the medical charity running the site, said on Thursday.

Since March 2015, Yemen has been heavily invaded by a military coalition led by Saudi Arabia, trying to restore power to ex-Yemeni president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi.

The Saudi coalition also aims to crush the popular Houthi Ansarullah movement, whose fighters have helped the Yemeni army defend the country against the invaders.

Ceaseless Saudi airstrikes and the destruction wrought by the kingdom's mercenaries and armed militia loyal to Hadi have wiped out much of Yemen's infrastructure, destroying hospitals, schools, and factories.

The COVID-19 disease has further deteriorated the humanitarian situation in the impoverished country, where 80 percent of the population are reliant on international aid for survival.

Jordan Threatens to Review Relations With Zionist Regime

AMMAN (Dispatches) – Jordanian Prime Minister Omar al-Razzaz says his country would review its relationship with the Zionist regime in case the occupying regime proceeds with its controversial plans to annex parts of the occupied West Bank.

"We will not accept unilateral Israeli moves to annex Palestinian lands and we would be forced to review all aspects of our relations with Israel," Razzaz told the official Petra news agency.

He also lambasted the Zionist regime for taking advantage of the global preoccupation with the novel coronavirus pandemic to implement "unilateral moves on the ground."

His comments came nearly a week after Jordan's monarch

King Abdullah II starkly warned the Zionist regime of a 'massive conflict' if it goes ahead with the annexation plans.

"Leaders who advocate a one-state solution do not understand what that would mean," King Abdullah said in an interview published by the German news magazine, Der Spiegel, on May 15.

"What would happen if the Palestinian National Authority collapsed? There would be more chaos and extremism in the region. If Israel really annexed the West Bank in July, it would lead to a massive conflict with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan," he said.

"I don't want to make threats and create an atmosphere of

loggerheads, but we are considering all options. We agree with many countries in Europe and the international community that the law of strength should not apply in the Middle East," the Jordanian ruler added.

Jordan is the only Arab state apart from Egypt to have open diplomatic relations with the Zionist regime. Even though Amman and the Zionist regime signed a treaty in 1994, bilateral ties have been tense in recent years.

On Wednesday, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Nickolay Mladenov said the Zionist regime's annexation threats constitute a major violation of international law.

"The continuing threat of an-

nexation by Israel of parts of the West Bank would constitute a most serious violation of international law, deal a devastating blow to the [so-called] two-state solution, close the door to a renewal of negotiations, and threaten efforts to advance regional peace and our broader efforts to maintain international peace and security," Mladenov said during a virtual UN Security Council meeting.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas declared the end of all agreements signed with the Zionist regime and the United States on Tuesday, after the new Zionist coalition cabinet under the leadership of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced it would annex parts of the West Bank.

Arms Control Experts Concerned by Saudi Nuclear Reactor Push

RIYADH (Dispatches) – Saudi Arabia is pushing ahead to complete its first nuclear reactor, according to satellite images that have raised concern among arms-control experts because the kingdom has yet to implement international monitoring rules.

Satellite photos show the kingdom has built a roof over the facility before putting in place International Atomic Energy Agency regulations that allow inspectors early verification of the reactor's design. Foregoing on-the-ground monitoring until after the research reactor is completed would be an unusual move normally discouraged under regulations to ensure civilian atomic programs aren't used to make weapons.

Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman said the kingdom would develop a bomb if necessary. Those statements made in 2018 raised a red flag within the nuclear monitoring community. Saudi Arabia's ministry of energy didn't respond to a request to comment.

While Saudi Arabia has been open about its ambitions to generate nuclear power, less is known about the kinds of monitoring the kingdom intends

to put in place. President Donald Trump's administration sent a letter to Saudi Arabia last year setting requirements to access U.S. atomic technology. The baseline for any agreement is tougher IAEA inspections.

"Saudi Arabia is aware of what their obligations are," IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi said Feb. 5 in Washington after meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

The situation hasn't changed since Grossi spoke, an IAEA spokesperson said by email, adding that other countries have completed the transition to stricter monitoring after scaling up nuclear programs.

IAEA inspectors who account for gram-levels of uranium worldwide verify the designs of facilities to ensure that nuclear material is contained within and can't be smuggled out via trap doors or hidden tunnels, said Robert Kelley, a former IAEA director who led inspections in Iraq, Libya and South Africa.

"They're going to have to work with the IAEA forever if they want to move toward nuclear power

and this would be the time to establish that relationship," Kelley, a nuclear engineer, said of Saudi Arabia.

At issue is the weak and outdated set of IAEA safeguard rules, called the "Small Quantities Protocol," or SQP, that Saudi Arabia continues to follow, according to Laura Rockwood, the IAEA's former chief lawyer who drafted stricter inspection guidelines to which the vast majority of countries adhere. "The problem is that design-information verification has to be carried out while it's being constructed," said Rockwood, who now directs the Open Nuclear Network in Vienna.

Satellite images show that a thick lattice of roof beams is now covering the 10-meter (33 feet) high steel reactor vessel. Argentina's state-owned INVAP SE sold the low-powered research reactor to Saudi Arabia.

While Saudi Arabia adheres to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the bedrock agreement that regulates the spread of material needed to induce fission, it still has to implement monitoring rules in line with its nuclear program development.

Palestinians Shun CIA After Ending Security Coordination

GAZA (Dispatches) – The Palestinians have suspended contacts with the CIA after announcing an end to coordination with the Zionist regime and the United States in protest at the occupying regime's proposals to annex territory in the West Bank, a Palestinian official says.

Saeb Erekat, secretary general of the Palestine Liberation Organization, said Washington had been told of the move after Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas said on Tuesday his administration was no longer committed to agreements with the Zionist regime and the United States, including on security coordination.

On cooperation with the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, Erekat told reporters in a video call: "It stopped as of the end of the (Palestinian) president's speech."

Intelligence cooperation with the CIA continued even after the Palestinians began boycotting U.S. efforts led by President Donald Trump in 2017.

Abbas has threatened before to end security ties. But Erekat said: "Things change and we have decided it is time now to change."

"Security cooperation with the United States is no more. Security coordination with Israel is no more," said Erekat. "We are going to maintain public order and the rule of law, alone."

The U.S. embassy in al-Quds declined to comment.

Later in the day, a senior Palestinian security official told Reuters that Palestinian forces had begun to pull back from some areas of the West Bank that they had policed in coordination with the Zionist regime during the coronavirus crisis.

"In light of the president's instructions about ceasing security coordination, the Israeli side was notified" of the partial withdrawal.

Zionist regime officials had no immediate comment and it was not clear how widespread the Palestinian forces' drawback was.

Palestinians worry that the Zionist regime, with the blessing of Washington, could carry out pledges to apply the Zionist regime's so-called 'sovereignty' to illegal settlements and the Jordan Valley in the West Bank, which they see as annexation.

Palestinians seek statehood in the West Bank and Gaza, with East al-Quds as their capital.