

3 Killed, 12 Wounded at Explosion in NW Turkey

ISTANBUL (Xinhua) – At least three Turkish gendarmerie forces have been killed, and 12 people wounded an explosion in Turkey's northwestern province of Sakarya. The explosion on Thursday night was the second one in a row in less than a week. The blast happened on a truck, which was transferring some explosive materials loaded from a firework factory, Turkey's Interior Minister Suleyman Soyulu told reporters on the scene. The factory exploded last week and killed seven people. At a televised speech, Soyulu said gendarmerie forces had been asked to carry out a controlled detonation of the factory's explosives in a stone pit in the Taskisigi neighborhood.

Thought for Today

When you feel afraid or nervous to do a thing then do it because the real harm which you may thus receive is less poignant than its expectation and fear.

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UK Apologizes to Saudi Arabia for Imposing Sanctions

Yemen Vows Retaliation After Saudi Destroys Civilian Vessels



Queen Elizabeth II greets Muhammad bin Salman, the crown prince of Saudi Arabia, during a private audience at Buckingham Palace on March 7, 2018 in London.

LONDON (Dispatches) -- The UK government privately showered Saudi Arabia's government with praise a day after publicly criticizing its human rights abuses and targeting it for sanctions, The Independent has reported.

The British government was accused of "calling to apologize" to the regime after some Saudi individuals were included on the foreign secretary's new "Magnitsky Act" sanctions list on Monday.

Defense minister Ben Wallace is understood to have discreetly telephoned his Saudi counterpart on Wednesday to reiterate the UK's support for the regime and its work, the paper said.

The call was not publicized by the British government in the UK, but Saudi Arabia's state-run news agency used the opportunity to boast about it in a press statement issued on Wednesday.

"His Royal Highness Prince Khalid bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, Deputy

Minister of Defense, received yesterday a phone call from His Excellency British Defense Secretary [sic], Mr Ben Wallace, during which the partnership between the two countries was discussed, especially in the defense field, and the efforts made by the two countries to enhance regional and international security," according to a statement on the Saudi Press Agency.

Saudi Arabian media reports that the minister "expressed his country's ap-

preciation for Saudi Arabia's role in addressing threats to stability in the region", adding: "He also affirmed the country's government's keenness to strengthen defense relations between the two friendly countries, especially in the field of military exports to the Kingdom."

The call comes as Liz Truss, the British international trade secretary, announced the lifting of a ban on British arms exports to the oil-rich country. A review of the sales launched by Truss on the orders of a court found "possible" war crimes were being committed by Saudi Arabian forces in Yemen but said they were likely "isolated incidents" because they had all happened in different places and different ways.

Layla Moran, a candidate in the ongoing Liberal Democrat leadership contest, told The Independent: "It looks like the UK government took action against Saudi individuals one day, then called to apologize privately the next.

"This sends completely the wrong message to nations and individuals involved in human rights abuses around the world.

"The government needs to decide once and for all what kind of global nation they intend the UK to be: a global champion of liberal values or an apologist for human rights abusers."

Twenty Saudi nationals were targeted for sanctions in the measures unveiled on Monday, in addition to individuals from Russia, Myanmar and North Korea.



In this file photo, ships are seen at Salif port in Yemen's western Red Sea province of al-Hudaydah, on May 13, 2019.

SANAA (Press TV) – The spokesman for Yemen's Armed Forces has censured Saudi Arabia for waging a war against the impoverished Arab country over destruction of two civilian vessels in the strategic Red Sea, vowing that Yemeni troops and allied fighters will respond to the act of aggression.

Brigadier General Yahya Saree denounced the attack as a flagrant violation of an agreement reached between the warring Yemeni sides during a round of UN-sponsored negotiations in Sweden back in December 2018.

Delegates from the Ansarullah movement and representatives loyal to Saudi-allied former Yemeni president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi attended the peace negotiations in Rimbo on the outskirts of the Swedish capital Stockholm. The talks resulted in the announcement of a break-through agreement.

The document included three provisions: a ceasefire along the Hudaydah front and the redeployment of armed forces out of the city and its port; an agreement on prisoner exchange; and a statement of understanding on the southern Yemeni city of Ta'izz.

Saree noted that the attack on the Yemeni boats, which took place 6 kilometers (3.7 miles) south of the Yemeni port of Salif on Thursday, was an attempt by Saudi Arabia to cover up its crimes.

He emphasized that the Yemeni army troops and allied fighters from Popular Committees will not sit idly by and watch such criminal acts and violations.

Saree also criticized the United Nations for its support of the Saudi

the world body to assume its responsibilities and immediately stop the attacks and ongoing naval blockade.

Earlier on Thursday, Saudi Arabia's state-run news agency SPA said the two boats were remotely controlled, belonged to Yemen's popular Houthi Ansarullah forces and were allegedly threatening navigation.

Colonel Turki al-Malki, a spokesman for the Saudi-led coalition, claimed that the boats were explosive-laden and had posed an "imminent threat to sea lines of communication, international trade and regional and international security."

Separately, Yemeni Minister of Oil and Minerals, Ahmad Abdullah Dares, has warned against an imminent humanitarian disaster in case the Saudi-led coalition of aggression continues to seize oil tankers destined to the impoverished Arab country.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched a devastating war on Yemen in March 2015 in order to bring Saudi-backed former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi back to power and crush Ansarullah movement.

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 over the past five years.

More than half of Yemen's hospitals and clinics have been destroyed or closed during the war by the Saudi-led coalition, which is supported militarily by the UK, U.S. and other Western nations.

Anti-U.S. Protest Erupts in Syria's Hasakah

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – An anti-U.S. protest erupted in Syria's northeastern province of Hasakah on Friday, state news agency SANA reported.

The protesters gathered in the village of Qasir in the countryside of Qamishli city in Hasakah, expressing their rejection to the presence of the U.S. and Turkish forces in northern Syria.

The protesters also condemned the economic sanctions that have been imposed on Syria recently by the U.S. under the so-called Caesar Act.

Several protests have erupted

in Hasakah either against the U.S. troops or the U.S.-backed so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) over the living conditions in that part of the country.

Meanwhile, SANA said a Syrian army checkpoint stopped a U.S. patrol from proceeding in the countryside of the town of Tal Tamr in the northwestern countryside of Hasakah.

It said soldiers at the checkpoint stopped three U.S. vehicles in the village of Mansaf Tahtani in the countryside of Tal Tamr and forced them to retreat toward their "illegal bases."

The U.S. has several bases in the countryside of Hasakah, mainly in areas controlled by the SDF.

The Syrian government has repeatedly called for the withdrawal of the U.S. troops from Syria, calling it forces of occupation as they entered the country without the consent of the Syrian government.

Meanwhile, a war monitor reported that Turkey-backed militants plundered several houses in Syria's Hasakah province in northeastern Syria on Thursday, accusing residents of being members of the Kurdish-led

so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

The so-called Free Army militants plundered the houses and set them ablaze in the villages of Tal Muhammad and Anik east of the city of Ras al-Ayn in the countryside of Hasakah province in northeastern Syria, said the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

Turkish troops and Turkey-backed militants have been controlling areas in northern and northeastern Syria following a military offensive launched by Turkey on areas controlled by the SDF last October.

Zionist Regime's Annexation Risks Outburst of Regional Rage: Russia

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – Russia has warned that the Zionist regime's contentious plans to annex large parts of the occupied West Bank and strategic Jordan Valley risk the outburst of violence across the Middle East region.

Speaking at a weekly press briefing in Moscow Thursday, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova described the impending move as a unilateral implementation of U.S. President Donald Trump's controversial proposal for "peace" between the occupying regime and the Palestinians, dubbed "the deal of the century," and reiterated the need for an international consensus to reject the regime's plans.

The deal of the century envisions al-Quds as "Israel's undivided capital" and allows the regime to annex illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank and Jordan Valley.

The plan also denies Palestinian refugees the right of return to their homeland, among other controversial terms.

Trump's plan has triggered waves of protest around the globe.

The annexation move will also put an end to the prospect of the so-called two-state solution to the Zionist-Palestinian conflict, Zakharova added.

She further noted that Russia shares the same position as that of the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) vis-à-vis such an attempt.

Zakharova also highlighted the need to restart negotiations between the occupying regime and the Palestinians under the auspices of the United Nations and the Quartet on the Middle East – the United States, the European Union, the United Nations and Russia – to work out a comprehensive and sustain-

able solution to the issue.

The last round of Zionist-Palestinian talks collapsed in 2014. Among the major sticking points in those negotiations was the regime's continued settlement expansion.

More than 600,000 Zionists live in over 230 settlements built since the 1967 occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East al-Quds by the Zionist regime.

The UN Security Council has condemned the regime's settlement activities in the occupied territories in several resolutions.

Less than a month before Trump took office, the United Nations Security Council in December 2016 adopted Resolution 2334, calling on the regime to "immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem (al-Quds)."

Iraqi Forces Foil Rocket Attack on Baghdad Green Zone

BAGHDAD (Xinhua) – The Iraqi security forces thwarted a Katyusha rocket attack targeting the heavily fortified Green Zone in the capital Baghdad, the military said on Friday.

The troops found the rocket in al-Qanat Street in eastern Baghdad and dismantled it before being fired by unknown militants who apparently fled the scene before the arrival of the security forces, the Iraqi Joint Operations Command said in a statement without giving further

details about when exactly the incident took place.

No group has so far claimed responsibility for the attempt of firing the rocket. The military bases housing U.S. troops across Iraq and the U.S. embassy in the Green Zone have been frequently targeted by militants' mortar and rocket attacks.

More than 5,000 U.S. troops have been deployed in Iraq to allegedly support the Iraqi forces in the battles against the Daesh terrorists.