

Iraq PM Calls Early Election for June 6, 2021

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – Iraq’s Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi has called an early general election for June 6, 2021, roughly a year ahead of when it would normally be held.

Early elections are a key demand of protesters who staged months of mass demonstrations last year. Iraqi’s parliament must still ratify the election date.

Kadhimi was selected by parliament in May to head a government that would guide the country towards early elections. His predecessor Adel Abdul Mahdi quit under pressure from protests in December last year.

Activists have also demanded fairer elections and changes to Iraq’s voting process and election committee.

The United Nations praised Kadhimi’s announcement saying it would promote “greater stability



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and democracy”.

Voter turnout in Iraq’s last election was 44.5 percent.

Kadhimi’s government faces a health crisis with a rapid spread of the coronavirus, and a fiscal crisis because of low oil revenues and

exports.

Mass protests swept over the capital Baghdad and the south of the country in October 2019, with young crowds demanding jobs, services, and urgent action against alleged rampant corruption.

Former Iraqi prime minister Adel Abdul Mahdi stepped down under the pressure of the rallies, which were sometimes marred by deadly violence.

Late last year, a new electoral law was passed, aiming at giving political independents a better chance of securing seats in parliament and weakening the hold of the ruling elites, but political differences prevail over the implementation of the legislation.

If the new law is implemented, it would change each of Iraq’s 18 provinces into a number of electoral districts, with one lawmaker elected per 100,000 people, meaning that it would practically bar parties from running on unified lists, which in the past has helped them win all the seats in a certain province.

Iraqi MP: Saudi Arabia, UAE Seeking to Free Terrorists From Prison

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – Saudi Arabia and the UAE have hatched plots to foment tensions in Dhi Qar province in southern Iraq to help the terrorists in Nasiriyah Central Prison (al-Hout) to escape, an Iraqi lawmaker has disclosed.

Abdul Amir Ta’eban told the Arabic-language al-Ma’aloumeh news website on Saturday that Riyadh and

Abu Dhabi are striving to stir tensions and make the ground prepared for unrests and rallies in Dhi Qar province to release the terrorists imprisoned in Al-Hout.

He also said that keeping the terrorists in al-Hout prison has heavy expenses for the Iraqi government.

A senior official of the powerful Badr Organization in Iraq

warned in May that Washington and Riyadh had hatched new plots to reactivate the Daesh terrorist group in the country.

Mohammad Mahdi al-Bayati told al-Ma’aloumeh that the U.S. and Saudi Arabia are returning the fugitive Daesh members from Syria to Iraq.

“The U.S. and Saudi Arabia’s current support for Daesh is

similar to their support for the terrorists in 2014 and there are many concerns about the return of the Daesh and their terrorist attacks in Salahuddin, Kirkuk and al-Anbar,” he added.

Also, in June, Iraqi millionaire businessman and politician Khamis Farhan al-Khanjar al-Issawi disclosed Saudi Arabia’s interference in the internal affairs of Iraq.

Netanyahu Accused of Promoting Fake Death Threats to Garner Sympathy

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was accused by activists of promoting fake death threats to garner sympathy, i24 News reported.

Netanyahu, who is due to stand trial for corruption in office, tweeted a screenshot of the alleged death threat, which was posted on Facebook by the profile of a woman called ‘Dana Ron’, where she threatened to “put a bullet in his head”.

He tweeted, “Today I shall file a complaint against the threat attached hereby, that calls to murder me by ‘a bullet in the head’.”

The enclosed Facebook post stated that “Bibi [Netanyahu’s nickname] needs to be taken down by force alone... Dictators are moved with a bullet in the head”.

However, when independent journalist and social activist Yossi Dorfman investigated the claims, including combing through Ron’s

Facebook account to find bizarre usage patterns and possible links to the right, coming to the conclusion that the threat was potentially fake.

He tweeted, “Since I do not trust Bibi, I went to check who is this Dana Ron that he said he would file a complaint against for inciting murder.”

He continued, is this a “false flag” exercise in which an activity is disguised to blame another party? Come with me for a detective thread”.

His findings revealed that Ron had updated her bio twice in the space of a minute, and posted anti-Netanyahu posts in quick succession, and there were in fact several accounts under the name “Dana Ron”.

Dorfman then speculated that the account was fake and being used by Netanyahu’s affiliates or Netanyahu himself as a political

tool.

These posts coincided with attacks on protesters by far-right Likud activists.

The more sceptical of the prime minister’s critics further accused Netanyahu of being behind the post himself, planting a digital “false flag”.

Facebook’s Israeli headquarters confirmed that the profile was in fact not authentic and earmarked for deletion.

This comes as Netanyahu faces unrest and protests from angry Zionist dissatisfied with the regime’s coronavirus response, and anti-annexation opposition.

In the latest general election, the third in the space of a year, Netanyahu managed to cling to the premiership by the tips of his fingers after making a deal with Kahol Lavan’s Benny Gantz, making him war minister and “alternate Prime Minister”.

Ringleader...

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On Saturday, the Law Enforcement Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran announced the martyrdom of two Iranian border guards in an operation in West Azarbaijan near the border with Iraq’s semi-autonomous Kurdistan region.

They achieved martyrdom during an operation to neutralize several smugglers who tried to sneak through the border near Sardasht late Friday.

The two fallen border guards were identified as Sergeant Matin Saedi and Private Mehdi Maleki. Officials said the bandits were captured and their contraband was confiscated.

In May, three Iranian border guards were martyred during clashes with members of a terrorist group in the same region.

Over the past few years, Iranian security forces and border guards have engaged in clashes with foreign-backed terror groups, many of whom cross the country’s borders with Pakistan and Iraq to carry out attacks.

How...

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destroy advanced weapons systems before Hezbollah’s allies can get them to Lebanon. However, these strikes sometimes kill Hezbollah personnel and threaten to start a cycle of strikes and retaliation.

“It’s a nice trap that the Iranians set for us, and I am afraid our leadership spent the last 30 years just blindly walking into it,” said Avi, who reportedly worked in South Lebanon during the 1978 to 2000 occupation.

“In this case the Iranians and Hezbollah have established a level of deterrence that would have been unimaginable to the Israel of the 1970s.”

The fruit of this effort, Avi said, “is a strong deterrence that says if you hit Iran or its nuclear program, we can strike back and hit Tel Aviv and even maybe Israel’s nuclear facilities”.

“But both sides know that an escalation like this can be threatened many times but used precisely once, as the next major war will be to the end of this problem. Iran did not develop this capability to use it lightly.”

U.S....

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Sherman, a professor at Harvard University, said in her article that Trump lacks any “discernible objective” in its foreign policy.

“As a result of Trump’s failures, the Middle East is further from peace and closer to the next Palestinian uprising than when he took office, the people of Cuba and Venezuela face a bitter future, the promise of African renewal is sidelined, and there is no real challenge to either Russia or China,” she wrote.

“The only possible conclusion is that the objective in Trump’s relations with other countries is not national security but Trump’s security. Nothing else explains the vacuous and vain approach of a foreign policy without objectives, without strategy, without any indication that it protects and advances U.S. interests.”

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Friday touched on Trump’s “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran, as he denounced calls to open new talks with the United States.

Without naming Trump, the Leader said, “This old man in charge, he apparently made some propaganda use out of his negotiations with North Korea. Now he wants to use (talks with Iran) for the (November 3 U.S. presidential) election.”

“Everyone must pay attention; I have said this for several times, and I have to repeat it, because some either fail to understand or pretend they can’t understand.

“If the enemy talks of negotiation, it means ‘come to the negotiating table and don’t develop missiles’. If you give in to their demands ... you will make yourself defenseless; and if you don’t, you will have to face the same story: disputes, threats and sanctions again. This is what negotiation means,” the Leader said.

Trump...

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have hijacked legitimate protests to wreak senseless havoc and destruction on innocent victims,” Barr said in testimony to the House Judiciary Committee.

Under an agreement between Oregon officials and the Trump administration on Wednesday, the federal forces were to begin withdrawing from the city on Thursday.

However, on Thursday Trump reiterated the need for federal intervention. “The governor and the mayor, we’ve been dealing with them, and we think they don’t know what they’re doing, because this should not have been going on for 60 days,” he told reporters.

“It’s not our job to go in and clean out the cities. That’s supposed to be done by local law enforcement,” Trump added.

Despite Trump’s assertions that protesters in Portland are dangerous “anarchists” and “agitators” who “hate our country,” a new analysis of arrest records by the Associated Press showed the vast majority were local residents without criminal records.

Many were Black Lives Matter activists who have been on the streets protesting since George Floyd’s death in May.

Others were marching with the headline-dominating Wall of Moms and Wall of Dads when they were arrested.

According to the AP, 95% of those arrested by police or federal agents were local to Portland and the vast majority had no criminal record in the state.

The average age of those arrested was 28, and many appeared to be college students.

Most were charged with misdemeanors for failing to comply with lawful order, however, some face felonies for arson or assault on an officer—the analysis shows the arrival of federal officers drew an increased number of black-clad provocateurs.

According to court records, the majority of the people charged with more serious offenses are white, and some have committed crimes prior.

Turkish Doctors Warn of Rise in COVID-19 Cases

ANKARA (Xinhua) – Worried about a potential rise in COVID-19 infections, Turkish health officials and doctors urged for increased vigilance during the four-day Eid al-Adha holiday, during which millions travel across the country.

The Eid is traditionally celebrated with mosque prayers, family gatherings and the sacrifice of animals, as well as visits to the elderly and cemeteries. But authorities and health experts have urged citizens to follow hygiene rules, including avoiding shaking hands, kissing and hugging each other.

For nearly two weeks, the reported daily new cases in Turkey have stood between 900 and 1,000.

Additional measures have been imposed on marketplaces of sac-

rificial animals, which will be frequented by tens of thousands of customers during the feast.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has also urged the public to strictly follow social distancing rules, wear a mask and obey hygiene measures, amid concerns that social interactions during the holiday can cause a dramatic rise in the number of COVID-19 cases.

“The outbreak is continuing, the virus kills and leaves really nasty after-effects in the body, so everyone should remain extra careful during the holiday,” Dr. Hamit Ekinci, an emergency specialist from the southeastern town of Diyarbakir, told Xinhua.

The doctor, who works in a private clinic, stressed that in his city,

the biggest in Turkey’s southeast with a population of some 1.8 million, new cases have risen to alarming levels in the past few weeks. The frustrating situation applies to neighboring provinces as well, he remarked.

“In Diyarbakir alone, we have around 300 new cases per day, so it is quite high and with this holiday, which generates an increased mobility amongst citizens, we are truly worried,” he said.

Ekinci pointed out that cultural and socio-economic reasons were instrumental in causing new infection clusters in his less industrialized city, which is also home to hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees who fled the war in their country.