

SANA'A (Xinhua) – Rains and flash floods in Yemen have completely destroyed four buildings and damaged 30 others in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage site of the Old City of Sana'a, residents told Xinhua on Sunday. Parts of the wall surrounding the city collapsed during the week-long rains. Several families fled their houses after they were partially collapsed. There are no reports of casualties yet. The old city of Sana'a was inscribed on the World Heritage List of the UNESCO in 1986. The old city has been inhabited for more than 2,500 years.

## Pentagon Report: U.S.' Kurdish Allies in Syria Recruiting Child Soldiers

## Saudi King Suggested Ground Invasion of Qatar to Trump: Report



This file handout picture dated May 20, 2017, shows U.S. President Donald Trump (L) and Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud (2nd-R) shaking hands during a meeting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

DOHA (Press TV) – A new report has revealed that Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud proposed a plan to U.S. President Donald Trump to invade Qatar in the summer of 2017, as a bitter feud between Saudi Arabia and the Doha government escalated.

According to American news magazine Foreign Policy, the Saudi monarch put forward the proposal during a telephone conversation with Trump back on June 6, 2017, suggesting a ground invasion of Qatar.

Trump, however, roundly dismissed the idea, and requested Kuwait to mediate between Saudi Arabia and Qatar to resolve the conflict.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt severed diplomatic and trade ties with Qatar on June 5, 2017, after the quartet officially accused Doha of meddling in regional affairs and supporting terrorism.

Qatar's Foreign Ministry condemned the decision to cut diplomatic ties as unjustified and based on false claims and assumptions.

That year, Saudi Arabia and its allies issued a 13-point list of demands, including the closure of Al Jazeera television news network and downgrade of relations with Iran, in return for the reconciliation.

The document also asked Qatar to cut all ties with the Muslim Brotherhood and the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah. Qatar rebuffed

the demands as "unreasonable."

Director of the Information Office at the Qatari Foreign Ministry, Ahmed bin Saeed bin Jabor al-Rumaihi, reacted to the report, stating that charges that Saudi Arabia and its allies have been trying to level against his country since June 2017 are meant "only to create justifications to achieve other targets that gamble with the future of the region and its people."

"The military option, which was considered by the blockading countries, violates international law and all international conventions, which we have approved as a member country of the UN, to resolve disputes peacefully. It also clearly indicates a 'gambling irresponsible policy', similar to that which led the region to a state of instability in the beginning of the 1970s," Rumaihi said in a series of Arabic posts published on his Twitter page.

He underlined that Saudi Arabia's decision up until now not to deny the report of the US magazine "indicates the reality of what had happened."

"The military option proposal, as revealed by the magazine, corroborates remarks made by Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah at a joint press conference with U.S. President Donald Trump on September 7, 2017 at the White House, where he said the Kuwaiti mediation successfully stopped military invasion of Qatar," he pointed out.

## Palestine Takes Zionist Field Executions to ICC

RAMALLAH (Dispatches) – Palestine says it has taken the issue of the Zionist regime's field executions against Palestinians to the International Criminal Court (ICC) after a 23-year-old Palestinian woman was shot and killed inside her home in the West Bank on Friday.

The international community should consider such field executions on a daily basis against Palestinians "war crimes that have reached unprecedented levels," Secretary-General of the Palestine Liberation Organization Saeb Erekat told reporters.

Dalia Samoudi, a mother of two, died of critical wounds caused by a bullet shot by the Zionist regime's army during its raid on the northern West Bank city of Jenin on Friday, according to a health ministry statement sent to Xinhua.

Her family said Samoudi was shot when trying to close the home windows to keep out the tear gas fired by Zionist troops during the raid.

The Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a press statement that it holds the Zionist regime di-

rectly responsible for the killing of Samoudi.

"All required preparations to file this crime and its details to the ICC are underway," said the ministry statement.

Tensions have been running high in the occupied territories amid plans by Zionist prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's regime to annex the occupied West Bank and the Jordan Valley. The plan has been delayed but it has not been called off.

Netanyahu has been driven ahead by President Donald Trump of the United States, who unveiled a plan for the Middle East in January that effectively sidelines the Palestinians.

The Palestinians want the occupied West Bank as part of a future independent Palestinian state with East al-Quds as its capital. Trump's plan envisions al-Quds as "Israel's undivided capital" and allows the Zionist regime to annex settlements in the occupied West Bank and the Jordan Valley. The plan also denies Palestinian refugees the right of return to their homeland, among other controversial terms.



In this file picture, Kurdish-led and U.S.-sponsored militants affiliated with the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) are seen in Dayr al-Zawr, Syria.

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – A new report to the U.S. Congress by the Office of the Inspector General at the U.S. Department of Defense has criticized the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) militants' ongoing practice of recruiting child soldiers, with the militant forces reportedly promising to stop doing so since at least 2014.

"Considerable additional detail on the SDF's actions to end the use

of child soldiers subject was provided in the [Department of State] Country Report on Human Rights Conditions section for Syria for 2019, issued in March 2020, but the report also notes allegations that children were still being forcibly conscripted and that at least one 14-year-old boy was killed in fighting in Baghouz in early 2019," the report indicates.

"Each year's edition of the DoS

Country Reports...since 2014 have contained similar promises by Kurdish entities partnered with the United States to end the use of child soldiers, and each report notes that their use apparently continued," the document notes.

Commenting on this state of affairs for the report, the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs said that this was an issue "limited more to the YPG [so-

called Kurdish People's Protection Unit militias] rather than the SDF or internal security forces as a whole."

The Pentagon's quarterly report, compiled for the period running April 1-June 30, 2020, also criticizes the U.S.'s NATO ally Turkey, citing a U.S. European Command assessment calling Turkey a "major facilitation hub" for Daesh terrorists even as the country simultaneously engages in "counter-ISIS (Daesh) activities."

"USEUCOM said that the Turkish action 'impacted ISIS's ability to smuggle fighters, funds and supplies', but it noted that the difficulty of securing Turkey's border with Syria and Iraq 'likely ensures' that Daesh will continue to move supporters and family members across the borders," the report suggests.

The report also points to allegations of human rights abuses by Turkish-backed militants in northern Syria, including "arbitrary detentions, extra-judicial killings, seizure of and resettlement of new populations in private properties, the repeated and deliberate shutting off of water access to half a million civilians, and transfer of arbitrarily-detained Syrians across and international border into Turkey."

## Senior Mufti: Iraqi Shias, Sunnis Ready to Fight for Expelling U.S.

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – A senior Iraqi Sunni mufti says an overwhelming majority in his country's both Shia and Sunni population is prepared to fight to force the U.S. pull out its troops from the country.

"8 out of 10 Shias are ready for resistance and prepared for expelling the American forces, and many sides, including (prominent Shia leader) Seyed Muqtada Sadr support our resistance," Sheikh Mahdi al-Samida'ei was quoted

by the Arabic-language al-Ma'aloumeh news website on Sunday.

He added that the Sunnis are also more prepared, compared to 2003, when the U.S. attacked Iraq, to fight against the U.S. troops' presence, noting that they can also supply weapons from different countries now.

The Iraqi parliament passed and approved a plan to expel foreign troops from its soil on January 6, 2019, two days after

the assassination of the Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Quds Force, Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, Deputy Chairman of al-Hashd al-Shaabi Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis and their companions in a U.S. military terrorist attack near Baghdad airport.

Senior lawmakers in Iraq have reiterated time and again that withdrawal of foreign troops from the country is necessary based on the law ap-

proved by the parliament.

"The approval to expel the foreign forces has been ratified and the former government was committed to it and it has turned into an imperative law," Ahmad al-Assadi, the chairman of al-Sanad al-Watani faction in the parliament, was quoted by the Arabic-language al-Ahd news website as saying in June.

No talks will be held to prolong deployment of foreign forces in Iraq, he underlined.

### As Precondition to Talks

## Afghanistan to Release 400 'Hard-Core' Taliban

KABUL (Dispatches) – Afghanistan agreed on Sunday to release 400 "hard-core" Taliban prisoners, paving the way for the beginning of talks aimed at ending more than 19 years of war.

Under election-year pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump for a deal allowing him to bring home American troops, the war-torn country's grand assembly, or Loya Jirga, on Sunday approved the release, a controversial condition raised by the Taliban militants to join talks.

"In order to remove an obstacle, allow the start of the peace process and an end of bloodshed, the Loya Jirga approves the release of 400 Taliban," the assembly said in a resolution.

Minutes later, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani said, "Today, I will sign the release order of these 400 prisoners."

Last week Ghani invited some 3,200 Afghan

community leaders and politicians to Kabul amid tight security and concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic to advise the government on whether the prisoners should be freed.

With the release, the Afghan government will fulfill its pledge to release 5,000 Taliban prisoners.

Talks between the warring Taliban and government will start in Doha this week, Western diplomats said. Ghani appealed to the militant group to pledge to a complete ceasefire ahead of talks.

Deliberation over the release of last batch of Taliban prisoners, accused of conducting some of the bloodiest attacks across Afghanistan, had triggered outrage among civilians and rights groups who questioned the morality of the process.

In 2019 alone, more than 10,000 civilians

were killed or injured in the conflict in Afghanistan, putting total casualties in the past decade over 100,000, a United Nations report said last year.

Ahead of the Loya Jirga, Human Rights Watch cautioned that many of the prisoners had been jailed under "overly broad terrorism laws that provide for indefinite preventive detention".

Ahead of November U.S. elections, Trump is determined to fulfill a major campaign promise of ending America's longest war.

The drawdown will bring the number of U.S. troops to "a number less than 5,000" by the end of November, Defense Secretary Mark Esper said in an interview broadcast on Saturday.

In a February pact allowing for the withdrawal of U.S. troops, Washington and the Taliban agreed on the release of the Taliban prisoners as a condition for the talks with Kabul.