

BAGHDAD (MEMO) – Iraq’s commitment to a recent agreement by the OPEC+ group will deprive the country of 750,000 barrels of oil per day (bpd), the former Iraqi oil minister warns. “OPEC+ deal would incur \$50 billion in losses over the next two years,” Ibrahim Bahr Al-Ulloum told Russia Today (RT). The ex-minister was recently reported to have filed a lawsuit in Iraq to annul the decision of the country’s former government, which had approved the deal to reduce oil output last year.

Wealth requires to be protected, while knowledge protects its owner.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

# UN: Yemen Famine Looms Large, Perpetrators Give Nothing

SANA’A (Dispatches) – ‘The specter of famine’ has returned to war-torn Yemen, the UN’s humanitarian chief has warned and has for the first time singled out Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait for giving nothing to this year’s \$3.4bn appeal for desperately needed aid.

Mark Lowcock told the UN Security Council that famine in Yemen, the Arab world’s poorest country, was averted two years ago because donors swiftly met 90 percent of the UN’s funding requirements, enabling humanitarian agencies to increase monthly aid from eight million to 12 million people and save “millions of lives”.

He said the UN appeal has received only 30 percent, about \$1bn, leaving nine million Yemenis to cope with deepening cuts to aid programs including food, water, and healthcare.

Lowcock said Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Kuwait “who have a particular responsibility, which they have discharged in recent years, have so far given nothing to this year’s UN plan”.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched the



Severely malnourished children were being treated at Aslam Health Centre in Hajjah, Yemen

devastating war on Yemen in March 2015 in order to bring former president Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi back to power and crush Ansarullah movement.

Alluding to financial pledges that have not been turned into actual contributions, Lowcock said, “It is particularly reprehensible to promise money, which gives people hope that help may be on the way, and then to dash those hopes by simply failing to fulfill the promise”.

“Continuing to hold back money from the humanitarian response now will be a death

sentence for many families,” Lowcock said. “So yet again, I call on all donors to pay their pledges now and increase their support.”

The U.S.-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), a nonprofit conflict-research organization, estimates that the Saudi-led war has claimed more than 100,000 lives over the past five years. Some 24 million Yemenis, or 80 percent of the country’s population, require some form of assistance or protection, according to the United Nations.

UN special envoy Martin Griffiths told the council “increased fighting, greater humanitarian needs, and the COVID-19 pandemic” have taken their toll.

Lowcock said the situation has been made worse by escalating conflict in recent weeks, especially in central Yemen. “In August, more civilians were killed across the country than any other month this year,” he said.

Griffiths told the Security Council that Yemen could “slip back away from the road to peace”. He said he sent all warring parties a draft of a “joint declaration” reflecting what had been said in previous rounds of talks.

“Now is the time for the parties to swiftly conclude the negotiations and finalize the Joint Declaration,” he said.

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have purchased billions of dollars’ worth of weapons from the United States, France and the United Kingdom in their war on Yemen.

Riyadh and its allies have been widely criticized for the high civilian death toll resulted from their bombing campaign in Yemen.

## UN Panel to Turkey: Rein in Allied Militants in Syria



Members of the s-called Syrian National Army stand on top of an armored vehicle in the Turkish border town of Ceylanpinar, Sanliurfa province, Turkey, Oct. 11, 2019.

NEW YORK (Press TV) – A panel of United Nations war crimes investigators has called on Turkey to rein in allied militants in northern Syria, who may have committed a range of war crimes against civilians, including hostage-taking, rape and torture.

In a report covering the first half of the current year, the UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria said militants of the so-called Syrian National Army, also known as the Free Syrian Army, detain civilians and transfer them to Turkey for prosecution, adding that such acts could amount to the war crime of unlawful deportation.

The panel warned that assassinations and rapes of civilians were on the rise in war-ravaged Syria.

“In Afrin, Ra’s al-Ayn and the surrounding areas, the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army may have committed the war crimes of hostage-taking, cruel treatment, torture, and rape,” panel chair Paulo Pinheiro told a news briefing.

“Turkey should act to prevent these abuses and ensure the protection of civilians in the areas under its control,” he said.

Panelist Hanny Megally said Ankara wields influence over militants affiliated with the so-called Syrian National Army as it has funded, trained, and allowed the terrorists to enter Syria from Turkish territory. “Whilst we can’t say Turkey is in

charge of them and issues orders and has command control over them, we think that it could use its influence much more to bring them in to check and certainly to pressure them to desist from the violations being committed and to investigate them,” Megally added.

Turkish troops launched a barrage of artillery rounds at Okaiba and Sawagia villages in the northern countryside of Syria’s northwestern province of Aleppo two days earlier.

Ankara has been providing support to militants operating to topple the Damascus government since early 2011.

Last year, Turkey seized control of the border town of Ras al-Ain after it launched a cross-border invasion of northeastern Syria with the help of its allied armed groups to push Kurdish militants affiliated with the so-called People’s Protection Units (YPG) away from border areas.

Meanwhile, Turkish and Russian officials are holding a new round of talks on developments in Idlib province of Syria, where the two countries back opposing sides.

Turkey’s Defense Ministry said on Wednesday that consultations between the officials on the conflict zone are underway at a technical level in Ankara, the Arabic-language al-Mayadeen television news network reported.

## Zionists Exploit Normalization to Escalate Al-Aqsa Violations

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – The Palestinian Islamic resistance movement Hamas says that the Zionist regime is exploiting normalization with Arab countries to escalate violations against Al-Aqsa Mosque, Islam’s third holiest site, and demolish more Palestinian homes in al-Quds.

“Storming Al-Aqsa Mosque by dozens of Israeli settlers early this morning and the plans of some extremist Jewish groups to carry out mass raids in the Muslim compound on Thursday are the outcomes of normalization deals with the Israeli occupation,” Hamas said on Tuesday.

In a statement, the movement’s spokesperson Abdul-Latif Al-Qanoa said the Zionist regime’s occupation authorities “do not respect peace or diplomacy”.

Al-Qanoa called on Palestinian citizens of al-Quds to defend Al-Aqsa Mosque against the arbitrary measures and policies by the Zionist regime.

Scores of Zionist settlers raided Al-Aqsa Mosque on Tuesday, with so-called Temple Mount groups calling for further raids tomorrow.

In another development, Al-Aqsa mosque compound will be closed from Friday following a spike in coronavirus cases, the

authority that administers the city’s Muslim holy places announced.

With cases of the virus on the rise in the Palestinian territories, the Waqf authority held an emergency meeting with health officials.

Waqf members decided to “suspend the entry of worshippers starting from Friday afternoon (September 18) for a period of three weeks”.

“We hope that citizens will understand this procedure, in order to preserve their health and wellbeing,” Waqf member Hatem Abdel Qader told AFP.

The call to prayer will con-

tinue to ring out across al-Quds’ Old City, Qader said, while Waqf employees will be allowed to pray at the site.

Jordan is the custodian of the compound, known by Muslims as the Haram al-Sharif, or Holy Sanctuary, and as the Temple Mount by Jews.

It is only the second time that the Waqf has decided to close the compound since the Zionist regime occupied east al-Quds in the Six-Day War of 1967.

The Waqf shut the compound at the onset of the pandemic in March, when sweeping closures upended religious life in a way not seen for centuries.

## Lebanon’s Cabinet Formation Stalling

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – Lebanese politicians have failed to form a government two weeks after French President Emmanuel Macron put the under pressure to accept a September 15 deadline.

President Michel Aoun met the heads of parliamentary blocs at Baabda Palace on Monday and Tuesday, but the leaders were not able to come to an agreement about the make-up of a new cabinet to be led by Prime Minister-designate Mustapha Adib.

Adib was expected to present the president with a proposed cabinet line-up during a meeting at Baabda Palace on Monday.

But after the 45-minute meeting with Aoun, he said they discussed forming a new government and that “God willing, everything will work out”.

Adib has made few public remarks since his nomination, but he is reportedly seeking a rotation of leadership in the four “sovereign” ministries.

The interior, foreign, finance and defense ministries have been controlled by the same parties in several cabinets, and a shake-up could threaten the parties’ hold over them.

While politicians failed to meet Tuesday’s deadline, Lebanese media has reported that a government may be formed by the end of the week.

“We’re seeing signals that [the political class] are falling back on the same kinds of sectarian battles,” Nadim El Kak, a researcher at the Lebanese Centre for Policy Studies, told The National.

The government would have to introduce

reforms to help Lebanon recover from an unprecedented economic and financial crisis and the destruction wrought by a devastating port blast in Beirut. The August 4 explosion caused by the detonation of thousands of tons of ammonium nitrates, which killed nearly 200 people, injured thousands and caused losses worth billions of dollars.

Hassan Diab, Adib’s predecessor, announced the resignation of his government on August 10, less than a week after the Beirut port explosion.

Adib, formerly Lebanon’s ambassador to Germany, was given the job of forming a government on August 31 after securing broad support from the political establishment, including Aoun’s Free Patriotic Movement, Hezbollah and former prime minister Saad Hariri.

## Jordan Forcibly Sending Syrian Refugees to Desolate Camp: Rights Group

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – The Jordanian authorities have over the past few months deported Syrian refugees to a desolate camp on the Syria-Jordan border, but this is the first time it has been accused of forcible transfers to the desert no man’s land, known as Rukban, a rights group says.

The move by Amman comes despite deteriorating conditions and accusations from rights groups that the returns are a breach of international law.

“People with security issues or other problems [in Jordan] have been deported” to Rukban, starting in July, a member of the camp’s administrative council told The New Humanitarian by phone, requesting anonymity out of fear for his safety.

The source could not provide the exact number, but Mahmoud al-Hmeili, a spokesperson for one of the councils that help govern the settlement, told TNH that 39 people had been sent to Rukban from inside Jordan in the past two

and a half months. Most had not remained for long, opting instead to travel on into Syria, al-Hmeili said.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, Amnesty International said at least 16 Syrian refugees had been “forcibly transferred” to Rukban on 10 August alone.

Tens of thousands people began arriving at Rukban in 2015, most having travelled long distances across the desert to flee Daesh terrorists. They had hoped to seek refuge in Jordan, but Amman put a halt to almost all new arrivals after a car bomb attack in 2016 killed several border guards.

By mid-2016 there were estimated to be some 70,000 people in and around Rukban, but that number has since dwindled to around 10,000. With aid sparse and food prohibitively expensive, many refugees agreed to be evacuated by the UN and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) to parts of Syria controlled by President Bashar al-Assad’s government.