



RAMALLAH (Dispatches) – At least 14 Palestinians were arrested during a raid campaign on the West Bank city of Nablus, Palestinian and Zionist regime officials sources said on Wednesday.

The occupying regime's army arrested 14 Palestinians from the cities of Ramallah, Nablus, Bethlehem and Tulkarm, according to the Palestinian Prisoners Club (PPC). Zionist troops often carry out overnight raids in Palestinian Authority-controlled areas in the West Bank.

Survey: Majority of Arabs Have Negative View of U.S.



Tunisian demonstrators hold up placards against U.S. President Donald Trump's Middle East proposal during a protest on February 5, 2020 in Tunis.

CAIRO (Xinhua) – A recently released major Arab public opinion survey has shown that 58 percent of Arabs hold negative views on U.S. foreign policy toward the Arab world, while over half hold positive views toward China's foreign policy.

The 2019-2020 Arab Opinion Index, the seventh in a series of yearly Arab public opinion surveys done by the Doha-based Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies, was based on the findings of face-to-face interviews conducted between November 2019 and September 2020 with

28,000 individuals in 13 Arab countries.

The survey found that the Arab public's most negative foreign policy evaluation is of the United States, with 58 percent of respondents holding negative views of U.S. foreign policy toward Arab countries.

At the same time, 81 percent of the respondents regard the United States as a foreign threat to the Arab world, according to the survey.

In comparison, 55 percent of the respondents hold positive views on China's foreign policy toward Arab

countries.

When asked to look at specific U.S. foreign policy areas, vast majorities of Arabs have negative views on U.S. policies toward Palestine (81 percent), Syria (81 percent), Yemen, and Libya (72 percent each).

Mohammad Almasri, the center's executive director, said in an interview with Xinhua on Wednesday that China's fair stand on issues involving the Middle East helped contribute to the survey's positive results.

"China's support for the Palestinian cause and non-interference in

Mideast internal affairs and conflicts have earned a good reputation," said Almasri, adding that many participants in the survey want China to play a bigger role to offset the negative influences of some Western countries.

China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said Tuesday at a daily news briefing that "this poll shows that justice lies in the hearts of the people."

Although some U.S. politicians are sparing no effort to shirk blame and take advantage of various problems to stigmatize and vilify China, what is right cannot be wronged and what is wrong will always be wrong, he said.

China's relationship with Arab countries, deeply rooted in the hearts of the people, is going from strength to strength with the passing of time, Zhao said.

In the face of the sudden outbreak of the pandemic, China and Arab countries have been helping each other with great sense of shared future and solidarity, setting a good example in the global fight against the pandemic and in the building of a China-Arab community with a shared future, the spokesman said.

"China is willing to work with Arab countries to continue to uphold solidarity and cooperation and jointly advocate peace, friendship and cooperation, thus benefiting the Chinese and Arab people and injecting more positive energy into safeguarding multilateralism and international fairness and justice," Zhao said.

Thousands Flee Onslaught in Southern Afghanistan



Tens of thousands of people have fled their homes because of intense fighting between Afghan security forces and the Taliban in Helmand province.

LASHKAR GAH (Dispatches) – Tens of thousands of people in southern Afghanistan have fled their homes following days of heavy fighting between the Taliban and security forces, officials said Wednesday, as violence continues to soar despite ongoing 'peace' talks.

Taliban militants launched a series of attacks on the city of Lashkar Gah in restive Helmand province on Sunday night.

The fighting triggered an exodus by local residents who crammed onto motorcycles, taxis and buses.

"More than 5,100 families or 30,000 people... have fled the fighting so far," Sayed Mohammad Ramin, director of the refugees department in Helmand, told AFP.

"Some families are still living in the open in the streets in Lashkar Gah, we don't have tents to give them."

Afghanistan's Acting Defense Minister Assadullah Khalid flew to the southern province on Wednesday to assess the situation and support the forces facing the major offensive that has overshadowed the peace talks.

Fighting was ongoing in at least

four districts on Wednesday, Afghan officials said, adding that security forces have repelled repeated Taliban assaults in the area.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan said thousands had fled and called on Taliban fighters and security forces "to take all feasible measures to protect civilians, inc. safe paths for those wishing to leave" the area.

A collision between two helicopters early on Wednesday in Helmand's Nawa district also killed at least nine people, according to Omar Zhwak, a spokesperson for the provincial governor.

The defense ministry said they were investigating the incident.

Helmand -- a Taliban stronghold -- is where Afghan forces had some of the bloodiest clashes with the militants.

The Taliban assault in Helmand is testing the resolve of the government and casting doubt over the talks to end the 19 years of war since the Taliban were ousted.

The violence could also throw into question President Donald Trump's pledge last week to bring home the remaining U.S. troops by Christmas.

Hezbollah, Amal Criticize Lebanon Team Ahead of Zionist Talks

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – Lebanon's Hezbollah and Amal movements criticized on Wednesday the delegation set to negotiate with the Zionist regime over a maritime dispute, calling for changing the team hours before the first meeting.

Formally still at war after decades of conflict, Lebanon and the Zionist regime agreed to launch talks over a maritime dispute running through potentially gas-rich Mediterranean waters.

A few days earlier, Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri announced a framework agreement for talks with the occupying regime on the dispute, saying the demarcation

will help Lebanon economically.

However, Hezbollah and Amal released a joint statement ahead of the talks on Wednesday, calling for an immediate reform of the delegation based on Berri's framework pertaining to the demarcation to the April 1996 ceasefire with the Zionist regime and UN Security Council Resolution 1701.

They said the inclusion of civilian figures in the Lebanese team contradicts the framework agreement, which only allows military officers to attend the periodic meetings.

Hezbollah and Amal "announce their explicit rejection of what

happened and consider that it deviates from the framework agreement, harms Lebanon's stance and supreme interests, transgresses all the nation's strengths, deals a major blow to its role, resistance and Arab position, and represents a surrender to the Israeli logic which aims at reaching any form of normalization."

Hezbollah has said the talks did not signal peace-making with long-time enemy, the Zionist regime.

The four-member team, headed by Deputy Chief of Staff of the Lebanese Army for Operations Brigadier General Pilot Bassam

Yassin, was named by the presidency's media office earlier this week.

Lebanese President Michel Aoun had earlier announced that the negotiations will be held at the UN headquarters in the southern Naqoura city on Wednesday.

"The negotiations are technical and talks should be limited to this particular issue, maritime borders, only," Aoun noted.

Lebanon is locked in a conflict with the Zionist regime over an area in the Mediterranean Sea spanning about 860 square kilometers, known as Zone No. 9, which is rich in oil and gas.

Zionist Regime Approves 1st Settler Units Since Arab Deals

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime approved 2,166 new illegal settler units across the occupied West Bank on Wednesday, official figures sent to AFP news agency showed, ending an eight-month lull in settlement expansion.

The approvals came less than a month after the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain signed agreements to normalize relations with the Zionist regime, which in return pledged to freeze its plans to annex swathes of the West Bank.

Under international law, settlements are considered illegal. Palestinian officials and much of the international community view them as the main obstacle to ending the conflict between the two

sides.

NGO Peace Now says the settlement uptick signals the occupying regime's rejection of Palestinian statehood and deals a blow to hopes of a wider solution.

It said about 2,000 more homes were expected to be approved on Thursday.

"[Zionist prime minister Benjamin] Netanyahu is moving ahead at full steam toward solidifying the de facto annexation of the West Bank," it said in a statement ahead of Wednesday's decisions.

But a controversial plan Netanyahu unveiled in January gave U.S. blessing to the regime's annexation of large chunks of the West Bank, including

the settlements.

The two Arab regimes were only the third and fourth in the Arab world to normalize relations with the Zionist regime, following Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has claimed he sees others following.

The Palestinians condemned the accords and quit the rotating presidency of the Arab League in protest at its failure to take a stand against them.

The treacherous agreements broke with years of Arab League policy on the Zionist-Palestinian conflict which made its resolution a precondition for normalizing ties with the regime.

Bahrain to Further Suppress Normalization Deal Critics

MANAMA (Dispatches) – The Bahraini regime's interior ministry has pledged to take "legal steps" against social media activists who criticize the normalization deal with the Zionist regime, news agencies reported.

The ministry said in a statement that it was monitoring social media accounts that are working to "defame" Bahrain as a result of its agreement with the Zionist regime.

It claimed that these accounts "spread sedition" and pose a threat to "national peace and stability" and are run by "fugitives" out of the country. It threatened "legal steps" against those who promote their messages.

On September 11, U.S. President Donald Trump announced that Bahrain was following the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in normalizing ties with the Zionist regime.

Bahrain opposition and NGOs along with Palestinians have criticized the agreement and slammed it as a stab in the back of Palestinians.

Palestinians, who seek an independent state in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, with East al-Quds as its capital, have condemned the deals as a betrayal of their cause against the regime's occupation.

The agreements have triggered a wave of anger among the public in Bahrain, where anti-Zionist sentiment runs deep. Bahrainis have held several protests in recent weeks in condemnation of the agreement.

Bahrain's main opposition group, the al-Wefaq National Islamic Society, has denounced the deal as an "ultimate betrayal of Islam and Arabs and a departure from the Islamic, Arab and national consensus."