

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – A group of Saudi dissidents exiled in countries including the United Kingdom and United States have announced the launch of an opposition party, the first organized political resistance under King Salman’s rule. Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy that does not tolerate any political opposition, but the formation of the National Assembly Party on the anniversary of the kingdom’s founding came amid a growing crackdown on dissent and freedom of expression by the regime. Past attempts to organize politically in the Persian Gulf state in 2007 and 2011 were suppressed and members arrested.

Among the characteristics of the believer there is neither flattery nor envy, except in the pursuit of knowledge.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

# Fatah, Hamas Agree on Palestinian Reconciliation

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – Palestinian rival factions, the Islamic resistance movement Hamas and Fatah have announced their agreement on a joint vision for achieving internal reconciliation and holding general elections in the Palestinian territories.

Fatah and Hamas also agreed in principle to hold presidential and legislative elections in Palestine by the end of this year, a well-informed Palestinian source said.

The announcement came after a three-day dialogue between the two factions in Turkey.

According to a joint statement, the dialogue in Turkey, an extension of the online national conference simultaneously held in Ramallah and Lebanon’s capital Beirut on Sept. 3, ended with both Gaza-based Hamas and the West Bank-based Fatah led by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas committed to “working jointly to confront all conspiracies until the achieve-



Palestinians celebrate after Hamas said it reached a deal with Fatah.

ment of full independence represented by establishing an independent Palestinian state with al-Quds as its capital.”

“The two movements will present their vision for a comprehensive dialogue with the participation of all other Palestinian factions,” the statement said.

The final agreement will be announced before Oct. 1 in an

online conference chaired by Abbas and in the presence of secretary-generals of 14 Palestinian factions including Fatah and Hamas, it added.

For the dialogue in Turkey’s capital Ankara, the Fatah delegation was headed by Jibril Rajoub, secretary-general of Fatah’s Central Committee, while Saleh Arouri, deputy chief of Hamas,

lead the Hamas team.

Currently the impoverished Gaza Strip is suffering from unprecedented pressure as it has been under an inhumane land, air and sea siege by the Zionist regime since 2007 and witnessed three wars since 2008. Zionist troops conduct regular air raids on Palestinians in Gaza under the pretext of hitting Hamas targets.

Analysts say Palestinian factions need to boost unity in the face of biased U.S. pro-Zionist policies.

The Trump administration has given Tel Aviv the green light to annex large parts of the West Bank and Jordan Valley in his self-proclaimed “deal of the century,” which was unveiled in January with the aim of legitimizing the occupying regime’s occupation and re-drawing the Middle East map.

The scheme has drawn global condemnation.

## Abbas Asks UN for Mideast Conference Next Year

UNITED NATIONS (Dispatches) – Palestinian Authority President Mahmud Abbas asked the United Nations on Friday to arrange an international conference on the so-called peace process, in the wake of Arab regime’s normalization of ties with the Zionist regime.

In an address to the UN General Assembly, Abbas asked Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to convene the meeting “early next year” and bring in “all relevant parties.” “The conference should have full authority to launch a genuine peace process based on international law,” Abbas told the virtual General Assembly in a recorded address. “It should aim to end the

occupation and grant the Palestinian people their freedom and independence in their own state along the 1967 borders with East al-Quds as its capital and settle final-status issues, notably the refugee question,” he said.

The United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, in a treacherous move that ignored the Palestinian cause, earlier this month normalized ties with the Zionist regime which sparked an outcry in the Muslim world.

Abbas said: “It is delusional to think that the Palestinian people could be sidelined.”

“You should all know that there can be no peace, no se-

curity, no stability or coexistence in our region without an end to the occupation and without a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian question,” he said.

The Palestinian Authority has refused diplomatic efforts by the Trump administration, saying it is biased toward the Zionist regime.

Meanwhile, Zionist prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu approved the construction of thousands more homes in the occupied West Bank, in complete defiance of international outcry against the occupying regime’s policies of land grab and illegal settlement expansion in the occupied Palestin-

ian lands.

Palestinian Arabic-language Ma’an news agency, citing a report published by Israel’s Channel 7 media network, reported that the Zionist premier had given the green light for plans to build over 5,000 units, after more than six months during which such construction had been frozen.

The report added that there have been contacts between settlement leaders and Netanyahu over the past few days, where Zionists have called on the Netanyahu to end the freeze on settlement activities in the West Bank or face large-scale protests against his administration.

## U.S. Smuggles Three Dozen Oil Tankers Out of Syria



This image shows an oil well in an agricultural field in the town of al-Qahtaniyah, in Syria’s Hasakah province near the Turkish border on June 10, 2019.

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – A convoy of 35 tanker trucks from the Jazira region of northeastern Syrian province of Hasakah has made its way out of the country into northern Iraq, SANA news agency has reported, citing local sources.

Along with the illegal export of Syrian oil, U.S. troops were said to have brought six military vehicles carrying 50 troops from Iraq into Syria, with the troops beefing up the illegal U.S. presence at the makeshift Kharab al-Jeer airport in northeastern Hasakah.

The smuggler comes a few days after another U.S. convoy, consisting of 30 tanker trucks laden with stolen Syrian oil, left the war-stricken country and sneaked into neighboring Iraq.

The U.S. looting of Syrian oil was first confirmed during a Senate hearing exchange between South Carolina Republican Senator Lindsey Graham and U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in late July.

Graham said Mazloum Abdi, general commander of the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), had informed him that a deal had been signed with an American firm to “modernize the oil fields in northeastern Syria.”

Damascus condemned in the strongest terms the agreement inked to plunder Syria’s natural resources, including Syrian oil and gas, under the sponsorship and support of the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump.

Syria’s UN Ambassador Bashar al-Jafari said at the time that the

Delaware-based Delta Crescent Energy company had “entered into a contract with the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces, an agent of the U.S. occupation forces in northeastern Syria, with the aim of stealing Syrian oil and depriving the Syrian state and Syrian people of the basic revenues necessary to improve the humanitarian situation, provide for livelihood needs and reconstruction.”

Meanwhile, people in northeastern Syrian province of Hasakah organized a protest rally to denounce U.S.’ coercive economic measures against their country while demanding expulsion of both U.S. and Turkish occupying forces.

According to Syria’s official news agency SANA, the latest rally on Thursday, which was held in village of Tal Sateeh near the city of Qamishli in northeastern province of Hasakah, demanded action against the “American occupiers” and the U.S.-backed mercenaries as well as the Turkish-backed militants.

The Syrian protesters also voiced their determination to liberate all Syrian territories from occupation of foreign forces and terrorist groups.

The participants stressed their resolve to extend moral and material support to the Syrian government forces and popular resistance until the full expulsion of foreign-backed militants.

They also hailed the achievements of the Syrian Armed Forces on the battlefield against foreign-backed militant groups across various parts of the country.

## Official: ‘Dangerous’ Containers Still at Beirut Port

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – Lebanon’s chairman of the parliament’s public works and transport committee Nazih Najem says there are 49 “highly dangerous” containers at Beirut’s port, El-nashra news website reported.

“Some of these containers have been at the port since 2009 and they have been neglected since then,” Najem said, adding that investigations must be conducted to check why these containers have not been removed until this moment from the port.

Two huge explosions rocked Beirut’s port on Aug. 4, destroying a big part of the city and causing damage with a cost estimated at over 15 billion U.S. dollars.

Lebanon on Thursday unveiled a compensation program for the

thousands of homes and businesses devastated by the blast.

President Michel Aoun signed a decree allocating 100bn Lebanese pounds (\$66m at the official exchange rate, or \$13m on the black market) to the program, his office said.

It added that the army and Beirut municipality would be tasked with setting up a mechanism to distribute the funds.

The compensation would go to owners of homes and businesses damaged in the explosion, which left more than 190 dead and destroyed swathes of the capital, a source at the presidency told AFP.

The army last week said it had surveyed 19,115 businesses and 962 restaurants damaged by the explosion.

## New York Mayor Boycotts Saudi Summit Over Rights Issues

NEW YORK (Dispatches) – New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio is pulling out of a G20 world cities summit to be hosted by Saudi Arabia at the end of the month after rights groups called for a boycott.

De Blasio announced his withdrawal from the virtual summit in a statement on Thursday, citing ethical concerns, and urged other mayors to follow suit.

The New York mayor has criticized the kingdom in the past, once describing the Saudi-led war in Yemen as brutal and immoral.

A global coalition of 16 human rights groups, including Action Corps, CodePink, Freedom Forward, the Geneva-based MENA Rights Group, Just Foreign Policy and the London-based ALQST, launched a campaign earlier this week and by calling on mayors of some of the world’s biggest cities to boycott the Saudi summit.

Code Pink lauded de Blasio’s decision to skip the summit, urging other mayors to do the same. “Just because the president and weapons manu-

facturers are complicit in the violence perpetrated by the Saudi monarchy doesn’t mean our cities need to be,” Code Pink Yemen campaign manager Danaka Katovich said in the email to NYC supporters.

“Yemen has endured over five years of air raids and blockade. As the suffering of Yemenis continues at the hands of MBS (Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman), no mayor should agree to participate in the summit.”

Riyadh’s Urban 20 (U20) summit is held as part of the kingdom’s chairmanship of this year’s G20. Among those invited, besides New York’s Bill de Blasio, are London mayor Sadiq Khan, Berlin mayor Michael Muller, and Paris’s Anne Hidalgo, as well as the mayors of Los Angeles and Madrid.

The U20 is being held on the second anniversary of the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, who was killed inside the Istanbul Saudi consulate in October 2018.

The coalition said that Saudi Arabia, “as an ab-

solute monarchy without any form of meaningful democratic representation, has a long record of silencing the very voices that are necessary for a meaningful global conversation”.

“Saudi Arabia’s brutal record has only intensified since Mohammed bin Salman became crown prince in 2017,” the letter read.

The coalition also calls on the kingdom to take immediate measures to end human rights violations, including pursuing real justice in the case of Khashoggi and releasing jailed activists.

Riyadh recently overturned five death sentences previously issued against the killers of Khashoggi in a final ruling that jailed eight defendants to between seven and 20 years.

None of the defendants were named and the final court ruling sparked an international outcry, with UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial killings Agnes Callamard and Khashoggi’s fiancée condemning the ruling.

“Human rights and civil society norms are under threat across the world,” the letter read.