

# UAE Has History of Transferring U.S. Arms to Extremists: Senator

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – U.S. Democratic Senator Chris Murphy says the United Arab Emirates has a history of transferring American weapons to extremists.

“The UAE is our ally, but there is no escaping that the Emiratis have a history of transferring U.S. arms to extremist militias, and have violated international law in Libya and Yemen. At the very least, we should not rush this sale through in a lame duck session,” Senator Murphy said on Twitter.

Senator Robert Menendez of New Jersey, on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, alongside Senators, Chris Murphy and Rand Paul, introduced measures to prevent President Donald Trump’s administration from selling arms worth \$23 billion to the UAE, American Politico newspaper reported.

The proposed deal includes 50 F-35 fighter jets, a stockpile of missiles and 18 drones.

Many other lawmakers also worry about whether the UAE would use the weapons in attacks that would harm civilians in Yemen, whose Saudi-led war is considered one of the world’s worst humanitarian disasters.

When the deal was announced, Amnesty International warned that the weapons would be used for “attacks that violate international humanitarian law and kill, as well as injure, thousands of Yemeni civilians.”



Emirati soldiers stand during rehabilitation and demining operations at the al-Anad airbase in Lahij Province, Yemen, October 5, 2015.

The senators said the Trump administration, seeking to rush the sale as it brokered a normalization deal between the UAE and the Zionist regime, circumvented the normal review process. They said State and the Pentagon failed to respond to their inquiries.

Weaponry involved includes the world’s most advanced fighter jet, more than

14,000 bombs and munitions and the second-largest sale of U.S. drones to a single country.

Past measures to block arms sales over concerns about Yemeni casualties passed the House and Senate with bipartisan support, but failed to get enough Republican backing to override Trump’s vetoes.

## New Daesh Ringleader Worked With U.S.: Documents

BAGHDAD (Press TV) – New documents reveal that Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Quraishi, the new ringleader of the Daesh terrorist group, had been cooperating with U.S. intelligence elements.

According to the newly declassified documents, the new Daesh commander has betrayed dozens of fellow Daesh terrorists in Iraq.

According to Iraq’s Al-Forat news, during an interrogation in 2008, al-Quraishi provided the Americans with confidential information about terrorist

elements.

At that time, he was detained by U.S. troops in Camp Bucca prison in southern Iraq where he met Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the former Daesh leader who allegedly killed himself last year.

Out of 66 reports of al-Quraishi’s interrogations conducted by the Pentagon, only three documents have been declassified.

According to these documents, al-Quraishi had accepted to cooperate with the U.S. intelligence service, giving the

names of 88 fellow terrorists to the Americans.

He had also disclosed information about his group’s abduction and terror operations, but denied any involvement in the 2003 attacks against foreign forces in Iraq.

His confessions also shed more light on how Daesh was established and how it could reinforce itself following the increase in the number of American troops in Iraq in 2007 and 2008.

The Daesh terrorist group was vanquished in Iraq and Syria

and lost all of its urban bastions in both Arab countries, but its remnants carry out sporadic attacks both on government soldiers and civilians.

The group’s ringleader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, was allegedly killed in a U.S. raid in northern Syria last month when he detonated his explosive vest after being cornered in a tunnel by approaching American Special Forces.

Daesh later confirmed his death and named Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Quraishi as the new ringleader.

## IRGC...

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But senior U.S. officials dissuaded Trump “from moving ahead with a military strike,” warning that such an attack could escalate into a broader conflict in the last weeks of his presidency, the Times wrote.

Salami noted Iran’s position in the energy-rich Persian Gulf, calling it a “strategic region for the world economy” in which Iran has “a privileged and unique role in ensuring the safety of the maritime expanse”.

“We are not limited to a specific geographic area to defend our security and our vital interests,” Salami said. “If some want to threaten the interests of this great nation and country, they will certainly not be safe anywhere on Earth,” he added.

He insisted Iran would not make the first move of aggression towards another country, but said that our “defense strategy is always accompanied by offensive tactics”.

## Saudi...

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that would not have won approval even under the old system. Next to nothing leaked, but the few details that did emerge gave relevance to the calls Ibrahim Warde, an adjunct professor of international finance at the Fletcher School of Tufts University in the U.S., had started receiving in mid-2017 from former students asking about prominent Saudis whose careers he had explored in course work. He sensed something big was looming in Riyadh, and he was right.

“Many of those who came out of my classes ended up in the world of financial intelligence,” he said. “I kept getting strange requests from some of them about who was involved in various financial shenanigans. It became clear that they were preparing reports for companies that were acting for Saudis back home.”

The lack of understanding of investment structures surprised some of the men being questioned. “They were guessing peoples’ net worth,” said the source familiar with events inside the Ritz. “It was a shakedown. At one point, they gave people access to their emails and phones and told them to contact their [banking] relationship managers in Geneva and ask for large sums of money. The callers were told there was no equity in the accounts. [The interrogators] thought all the assets were in cash.”

A senior banking source, who refused to be named, said executives across the Swiss banking sector had launched an investigation in the wake of irregular transactions at the time of the crackdowns. “A lot of these transfers appear to have been made under duress. Some were stopped, because the requests were not routine. But some got through.”

Many of those detained told aides they remained puzzled about why they were there. Some had been confidantes of the Saudi monarchy over generations, benefiting from their access to monarchs and princes who had not been shy in cultivating business leaders through access and largesse. All Saudi royals had enjoyed relationships with industrialist dynasties and political patronage had been central to the trade-off. “This is an absolute monarchy, which means that leaders can do what they want,” the source said. “People won favors through long-held customs.”

“Often they had no idea what they were looking for. It became straight up blackmail in some cases, because some of the detainees were refusing to sign anything. There was no due process. There is no such thing in the Saudi justice system as a plea bargain, but that was what they were trying to enforce.”

Three years on, Prince Muhammad remains insistent that all those stripped

of wealth had been guilty of corruption. Saudi officials say up to \$107bn (£80bn) was recovered from 87 people and returned to the Saudi treasury. The detentions garnered broad support across parts of Saudi society, where the crown prince remains popular despite three years of damaging headlines, including the killing of the dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi, carried out in Istanbul by a hit squad linked to Prince Mohammed’s former aide.

The sources who spoke to the Guardian said the figure seized was closer to \$28bn and claimed the purge came at the price of breaking trust between the monarchy and the Saudi business community.

“This was about consolidating his rule, plain and simple. It came before the Khashoggi atrocity, and the fact that he got away with it allowed him to do the latter. The same guards involved in the Ritz were involved in the killing. History won’t be kind to MBS on either,” one of the sources said.

Warde said: “Anti-corruption initiatives are usually politically motivated. They are often tools for singling out those who were enriched. They provide selective lists of those who were enriched.”

## Leader’s...

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He also said the U.S. tries to link anything happening in the world to someone in Iran.

While stressing he wanted to avoid conflict, Dehqan warned that the occupying regime of Israel’s expanding presence in the Mideast could turn into a “strategic mistake.” The Zionist regime just reached normalization deals with Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates.

“It is opening an extensive front,” he said. “Just imagine every Israeli in any military base can be a target for groups who are opposed to Israel.”

Dehqan also said Iran continues to seek the expulsion of all American forces from the region as revenge for the U.S. drone strike in Baghdad that martyred Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the head of its expeditionary Quds Force in January. That strike saw Iran launch a retaliatory ballistic missile attack on U.S. troops in Iraq that injured at least 110 American troops.

Iran’s retaliatory strikes were a mere “initial slap,” Dehqan said. And there would be no easy return to negotiations with the U.S. in part due to that, he added. “We do not seek a situation in which (the other party) buys time to weaken our nation,” he said.

## Iran...

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which Ottawa has been presenting for several years now in line with its hostile policies against the Islamic Republic of Iran, was adopted today with the votes of less than half the UN member states, including the Israeli regime, the United States, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Albania, Britain and Canada,” he said. “One-hundred fourteen countries voted against this resolution or abstained, or did not take part in the voting session.”

He said it is a shame that Canada has brought together “a bunch of governments with notorious records in the domain of human rights,” including the American, Israeli and Bahraini regimes, to teach human rights to Iranian people.

Khatibzadeh advised the Canadian officials to correct their anti-human rights performance both inside and outside that country and not only stop this regime’s systematic policy of committing genocide against Canadian aborigines, but also answer for their complicity in anti-human crimes committed by the Saudi and Zionist regimes against Yemeni and Palestinian people.

## Gaza ‘Ill-Equipped to Face Major Spike’ in COVID Cases: UN

NEW YORK (MEMO) – The Gaza Strip’s “crumbling infrastructure, poor living conditions and fragile healthcare system make it ill-equipped to face a major spike in [COVID-19] cases,” UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East says.

Nickolay Mladenov told a Security Council briefing that the Palestinians “continue their efforts to prevent and control the spread of the deadly covid-19 virus. After weeks of declining numbers, however, active cases are again on the rise.”

“Gaza remains the most immediate and pressing concern. Its crumbling infrastructure, poor living conditions and fragile healthcare system make it ill-equipped to face a major spike in cases,” he continued.

“Already affected by severe movement and access restrictions, cycles of violent escalation and years of humanitarian and socio-economic calamity, the two million Palestinians living within Gaza’s confines would face catastrophic consequences from a major outbreak.”

The envoy continued: “Eight months into the pandemic, Palestinian un-

employment levels are alarmingly high – 121,000 Palestinians lost their jobs in the wake of the first lockdown and employment figures declined by 17 percent in Gaza.”

Some 40 percent of Palestinian households lost more than half their income in this period and food insecurity rates have soared. The most recent reports suggest any recovery will be slow and partial.

Mladenov stated that “women and children continue to bear the brunt of the combined effect of the pandemic and the socio-economic crisis across the OPT.”

According to Mladenov, “the United Nations and its partners have continued to provide critical humanitarian and development assistance” in order to address this emergency.

The Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza carried out 2,289 tests for COVID-19 yesterday and recorded 368 new cases, bringing the accumulated number of cases to 12,439 with 41 in a critical condition and 341 in need for medical care.

## Egypt Cracks Down on Rights Group, Arrests Members

CAIRO (Al Jazeera) – A prominent Egyptian rights group has said security agents have arrested its executive director, its third member to be taken into custody in less than a week despite international criticism.

“Gasser Abdel Razek was detained by security forces from his home in Maadi and taken to an unknown location,” the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR) tweeted late on Thursday. It gave no further details.

On Sunday, Egyptian security forces arrested the group’s office manager, Mohamed Basheer, on charges including “joining a terror group” and “spreading false news”.

Three days later, on Wednesday, Karim Enarah, director of criminal justice at EIPR, was arrested while vacationing in the Red Sea resort of Dahab in South Sinai.

He was taken by security officers to an undisclosed location, the group said on Twitter, adding that he was ordered to be detained for 15 days pending investigations.

The arrests come after senior diplomats visited EIPR for a briefing on the human rights situation on November 3.

Pre-trial detention can last up to two years under Egyptian law, but the period is often extended.

The United States, a close ally of Egypt, said it was “deeply concerned” by the detentions.

“The United States believes that all people should be free to express their beliefs and advocate peacefully,” the State Department’s bureau handling human rights said on Twitter.

U.S. President Donald Trump has stood

firmly behind Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, whom he reportedly called “my favorite dictator”, but President-elect Joe Biden has signaled he will take a firmer line on human rights.

Legislators from Biden’s Democratic Party voiced outrage at the arrests and urged Egypt to free the activists immediately.

“We cannot stay silent as human rights defenders are targeted and detained,” said Representative Mark Pocan, co-chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

Rights groups estimate some 60,000 detainees in Egypt are political prisoners.

These include secular activists, journalists, lawyers, academics and scholars arrested in a sweeping crackdown on dissent under President el-Sisi.