

ISIL Parades 21 Iraqi Kurdish Fighters in Cages

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – **ISIL Takfiri terrorists have released a new video which presumably shows 21 Kurdish Peshmerga fighters in cages being paraded through packed streets in the embattled Iraqi province of Kirkuk.**

The nine-minute footage, released on Saturday, shows the orange jumpsuit-clad prisoners being interviewed by an ISIL terrorist holding a microphone with the group’s insignia, before being seemingly marched to their deaths.

The prisoners are driven one by one on the backs of pick-up trucks with flag-waving ISIL terrorists ac-

companying each prisoner.

The Takfiri terrorists also threaten Kurdish fighters to have the same fate of these captives if they continue to fight against the ISIL.

It is unclear when the newly-released video was captured, as similar images showing ISIL terrorists parading captive Peshmerga fighters around a crowded street had circulated earlier this month.

Based on information from local Kurdish media and distinctive landmarks seen in the new video, the footage may have been taken in the town of Hawija, located southwest of the city of Kirkuk.

ISIL has so far released several similar videos showing the execution of its captives from different countries, including the United States, Britain, and Japan. Last week, the terrorists beheaded 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians in Libya.

On February 3, the ISIL released a video online showing the burning to death of pilot Moaz al-Kassasbeh, who had been taken hostage in December 2014 after his plane went down in northern Syria, during a mission against the terrorist group.

The video showed Kassasbeh dressed in an orange jumpsuit and

surrounded by flames inside a metal cage.

The footage raised Jordanian authorities’ anger and ultimately led to a step-up in Amman’s airstrikes against ISIL positions in the region.

ISIL started its campaign of terror in Iraq in early June 2014. The heavily-armed terrorists took control of the country’s northern city of Mosul before sweeping through parts of the country’s Sunni Arab heartland.

Iraqi soldiers, police units, Kurdish forces, Shia volunteers and Sunni tribesmen have succeeded in driving the ISIL terrorists out of some areas in Iraq.

Syria...

(Continued From Page One)

Cavusoglu, confirmed that Ankara had notified Syria before the operation that it was vacating the tomb temporarily, and that it would return to the area when it is “ready” to do so.

“We got permission from no one, we conducted it with our own initiative,” he said.

In Tehran, a senior Iranian official said there is no justification for Turkey’s military operation inside the Syrian territory.

“Military action by a neighboring country on Syria’s soil is by no means justified,” Iran’s Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab and African Affairs Hussein Amir-Abdollahian told Fars news agency.

“Military intervention in Syria by its neighbors will further complicate the situation and will bear no results but causing more insecurity in the region,” he added.

Amir-Abdollahian said Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey should promote common political approaches for resolving problems in the region.

“Hiring irresponsible armed groups triggers a vicious cycle that will increase terrorism and make regional countries more insecure,” he said.

The tomb belonged to Suleyman Shah, the grandfather of Osman I, founder of the Ottoman Empire. The site along the Euphrates River is revered by Turkey, a strongly nationalist country whose rights there stem from a 1921 treaty with France, then the colonial power in Syria. The Ottoman Empire collapsed in the early 20th century after World War I.

In the 1970s, Turkey moved the mausoleum to its last location because the old site at a castle further south in Syria was to be inundated by the waters of a new dam.

Shah, a Turkic leader, is believed to have drowned in the Euphrates in the 13th century. His followers headed north into what is today Turkey, where they launched the Ottoman Empire. Some historians question official accounts about the Shah’s tomb, saying they might have been retrospectively concocted to enrich an imperial identity for Turks.

Turkey has wanted Syrian President Bashar Assad overthrown and has backed militants fighting against him. Earlier this week, Turkey signed an agreement with the U.S. to train and arm militants fighting in Syria.

Anti-Iran...

(Continued From Page One)

to the opposition in Syria – but by now most of these militant groups have been absorbed into ISIL and Jabhat al-Nusra, the Al-Qaeda affiliate, so it is they “who now have the money and the weapons”.

Hussein would not identify the states from which the funding for ISIL comes today, but implied that they were the same Persian Gulf oil states that financed militants in Iraq and Syria in the past.

Mahmoud Othman, a veteran member of the Iraqi Kurdish leadership who recently retired from the Iraqi parliament, said there was a misunderstanding as to why Persian Gulf countries paid off ISIL.

It is not only that donors are supporters of ISIL, but that the group “gets money from the Arab countries because they are afraid of it,” he says. “Persian Gulf countries give money to Da’esh so that it promises not to carry out operations on their territory.”

“I know three foreign fighters,” said Ahmad, a 45-year-old shopkeeper still working in Mosul. “I usually see them at checkpoints in our neighborhood: one is Turkish and the others are Europeans. Some of them speak a little Arabic. I know them well because they buy soft drinks from the shops in our neighborhood. The Turkish one is my customer. He says he talks to his family using the satellite internet service that is available for the foreigners, who

have excellent privileges in terms of salaries, spoils and even captives.”

Terrorists...

(Continued From Page One)

Isis is attempting to use any sort of disease or virus to attack our homeland”.

Dr Filippa Lentzos, a senior research fellow at King’s College London and an expert on bioterrorism, said terrorists looking to use the virus as a weapon would encounter problems. “It doesn’t spread quickly at all,” she said. “Terrorists are usually after a bang and Ebola isn’t going to give you that.”

On average, a person infected with Ebola will infect two more people. In a developed country such as the UK transmission would be even more limited.

“People with Ebola are infectious only when they show symptoms,” Lentzos said. “Could terrorists go to west Africa, get infected, then come back and sit on the tube? Sure, but they’re not likely to be functional for very long. They’re going to be very sick and you’ll see that. So they would have only a very small window in which to operate. And in a country with a developed public health system like the UK, there would be plenty of chances to clamp down on an outbreak.”

Other biological weapons would potentially be more attractive to terrorists, experts suggested. Unlike Ebola, which requires the transmission of body fluids, anthrax spores can be dried and milled down to form tiny particles that can be inhaled.

However, even the suggestion that Ebola could be weaponized made it a potentially powerful weapon for terrorists, Lentzos suggested. “If your aim is not to kill a lot of people, or even make them ill, but instead to frighten them and cause a huge level of societal disruption, then bioterrorism would do that. It elicits exceptionally high levels of fear, disgust and abhorrence.”

The use of pathogens as a weapon has been tried before. Following the attacks in New York and Washington in 2001, five people died in the U.S. after opening letters laced with anthrax. In the 1980s, a cult in Oregon spread salmonella on salad bars in restaurants in an attempt to keep voters from the polls so its preferred candidates would win.

“The risk of small-scale bioterrorism attacks is possible and very likely,” Lentzos said.

Porton Down is known to have experimented with Ebola but a specific request for the laboratory to analyze the virus’s potential use by “non-state agents” highlights the growing concern that terrorists are becoming increasingly inventive in their choice of weapons.

One scenario could see terrorists combining genes from different pathogens to synthetically create super pathogens that could spread disease far more effectively than Ebola. But Lentzos suggested this was unlikely. “It’s pretty damn hard to make dangerous pathogens from scratch in the lab. Experts have a really hard time doing that. At this point I’m not sure that’s what we need to worry about.”

Lentzos said that focusing on the terrorist threat posed by Ebola risked losing sight of the bigger picture. “To beat Ebola we have to worry less about terrorism and more about public health. Disease knows no borders.”

Afghans...

(Continued From Page 2)

Although the U.S.-led invasion removed the Taliban from power, insecurity continues in the country.

The U.S.-led combat mission in Afghanistan ended on December 31, 2014. However, at least 13,000 foreign forces, mainly from the United States, will remain in Afghanistan in what is said to be a support mission.

Peaceful Anti-Regime Protests Held in Bahrain

MANAMA (Press TV) – **Anti-regime demonstrators have taken to the streets in Bahrain, calling for the release of political prisoners.**

Saturday’s peaceful protests were held on the Island of Sitra, the northern village of Daih, and the al-Musalla village located west of the capital city Manama.

The protests come following weeks of demonstrations calling for the release of prominent Shia cleric, Sheikh Ali Salman, the secretary general of Bahrain’s main opposition bloc al-Wefaq National Islamic Society.

Salman was arrested on December 28, 2014, after Manama accused him of seeking regime change and collaborating with foreign powers.

Bahrain, a close ally of the United States in the Persian Gulf region, has been witnessing almost daily protests against the ruling Al Khalifa dynasty since



Bahraini protesters hold a banner reading, “Bahrain, a revolution of the people that refuse to be silent”, during a demonstration, in the village of Daih

early 2011, with Manama using heavy-handed measures in an attempt to crush the demonstra-

tions.

Scores of Bahrainis have been killed and hundreds of others in-

jured and arrested in the ongoing crackdown on peaceful demonstrations.

Over Zionist Regime Gas Deal Egypt Court Acquits Former Minister

CAIRO (Dispatches) – **A court in Egypt has acquitted a former oil minister, who served under ex-dictator Hosni Mubarak, of charges of selling cheap gas to the occupied territories.**

The Cairo court exonerated Sameh

Fahmi and five other former oil officials in a retrial on Saturday, after they were convicted in 2012 for selling the Zionist regime natural gas at below the market price, and were sentenced to between 3 and 15

years in prison.

The defendants had been found guilty of harming the country’s interests by signing a deal to sell gas to Israel for 1.5 dollars per British thermal unit, almost nine times lower than the market price.

The ruling comes as a large number of Mubarak-era officials have recently been cleared in retrials after being initially convicted.

In November last year, an appeals court absolved Mubarak and his Interior Minister Habib al-Adly of charges of killing peaceful pro-

testers during the 2011 revolution, which resulted in Mubarak’s ouster.

The former dictator was also exculpated during the same trial of charges of exporting cheap gas to the occupied territories.

Following the court order, Egyptians took to the streets to protest the ruling.

The export of Egypt’s gas to Israel has always been a controversial issue in the North African country, which fought four wars with the regime before signing a peace treaty with the regime in 1979.

Gaza Runs Out of Fuel, Power Plant Stops Working

GAZA STRIP (FNA) – **Shortages in fuel reserves have forced Gaza’s power plant to shut down one generator, out of two, the plant manager, Rafiq Maliha, said.**

Maliha said, in a press statement on Saturday, the breakdown has cropped up due to acute shortages in the needed fuel supplies, PIC reported.

Earlier, Thursday, The Energy Authority in Gaza raised alarm bells over a potential breakdown to rock the electricity generators of Gaza’s sole power plant with the advent of a frosty storm.

The authority further slammed the Petroleum Corporation for having trimmed down the quantities of fuel dispatched to Gaza’s sole power plant, saying they are not enough to operate the generators.

The statement urged the General Petroleum Corporation to work on supplying the blockaded Strip with the needed fuel supplies without further delay.

Over 40% of electricity shortage has been documented in power-starved Gaza. Deficit rates hit 60% due to frequent breakdowns of power generators.