

# ISIL Takfiris Kidnap 23 People in Northern Iraq

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – **Members of the Takfiri ISIL terrorist group have abducted 23 people in Iraq’s conflict-stricken northern province of Salahuddin.**

An Iraqi security source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the Takfiri terrorists kidnapped 23 individuals in the city of Shirqat, located some 300 kilometers (190 miles) north of the capital, Baghdad, on Sunday.

According to Iraqi News, the fate

and whereabouts of the abductees are unknown, added the source, saying that the civilians were taken hostage on the alleged ground that they were in collaboration with Iraqi security forces.

The development comes a day after ISIL members burned to death 50 civilians in the town of Hit, located about 140 kilometers (85 miles) west of Baghdad.

On February 17, the terrorists torched to death at least 45 people

in the conflict-ridden city of Khan al-Baghdadi, situated about 180 kilometers (110 miles) northwest of Baghdad.

The identities of those killed by ISIL in Khan al-Baghdadi have not been released, but local police chief Colonel Qasim al-Obeidi said many of the victims were believed to have been security forces.

ISIL started its campaign of terror in Iraq in early June 2014. The heavily-armed terrorists took con-

trol of Mosul before sweeping through parts of the country’s Sunni Arab heartland.

The terrorists have been carrying out horrific acts of violence, including public decapitations, against all Iraqi communities such as Shias, Sunnis, Kurds and Christians.

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

## Palestine Negotiator: Zionist Regime Tax Freeze Aims ‘to Collapse PA’

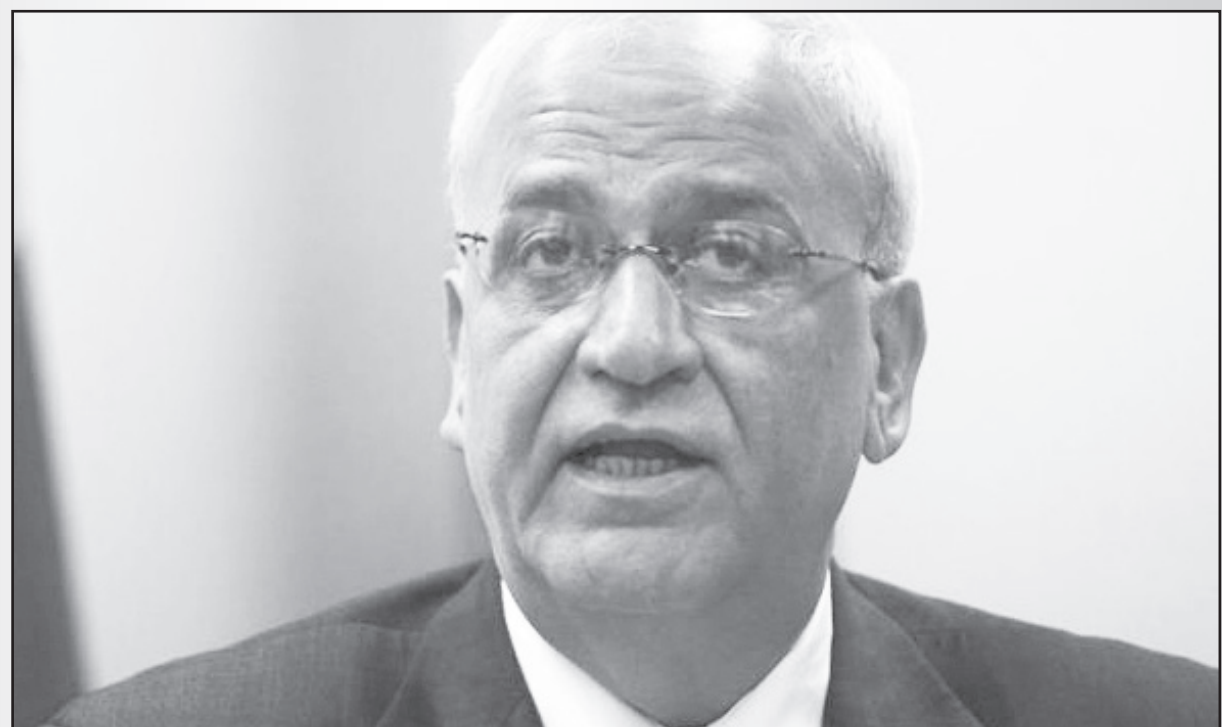
WEST BANK (Dispatches) – **A top Palestinian official says the Zionist regime is trying to topple the Palestinian Authority (PA) by continuing to freeze millions of dollars in crucial tax money.**

“Israel is aiming to collapse the Palestinian Authority with all its institutions, so the international community should do much more than stating what the results of such move might be,” Palestinian chief negotiator Saeb Erekat said on Sunday.

He urged international action to put pressure on Israel to release the PA money which remains frozen since two months ago, adding, “This money is not Israeli money nor donors’ money, this is an unprecedented act of piracy.”

Under an economic agreement signed in 1994 between the two sides, the occupying regime transfers USD 127 million per month in value-added tax and customs duties imposed on goods intended for the markets in Palestine that pass through the regime.

This amount of money collectively makes up around two-thirds of the Authority’s annual



*Saeb Erekat, Palestinian chief negotiator, speaking to journalists during a press conference in the city of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank*

budget.

As part of efforts to hinder Palestine’s efforts for joining the International Criminal Court (ICC), the regime decided on January 2 to impose economic sanctions against the PA. It froze the transfer of monthly tax reve-

nues and customs payments collected on behalf of the PA.

Palestine’s membership of the ICC paves the way for the PA to sue Israel for war crimes.

“Israel has been doing its best to lead to the PA collapse for years. [Israeli Prime Minister Ben-

jamin] Netanyahu wants a PA without any authority and now he withholds the funds in order to make it collapse,” Erekat said.

He further asked the international community to do “much more” than merely issuing statements of condemnation.

## Zionist Aircraft Violate Lebanese Airspace

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – **The Zionist regime’s fighter jets have once again violated Lebanon’s airspace, flying at low altitudes over several areas across the Arab country.**

According to Lebanese media, the Tel Aviv regime’s warplanes penetrated Lebanese skies on Sunday and flew over the Marjayoun district in the southern governorate of Nabatieh.

In a similar move, Zionist aircraft also descended over the Beqaa valley in eastern Lebanon near the Syrian border.

Zionist warplanes have repeatedly violated Lebanon’s airspace in a breach of the UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which led to a ceasefire in the war of aggression the occupying regime waged against Lebanon in 2006 and calls on Tel Aviv to respect Lebanon’s territorial integrity.

In 2009, Lebanon filed a complaint with the United Nations, presenting over 7,000 documents pertaining to Israeli violations of the Lebanese territory.

While the regime regularly carries out aerial maneuvers over Lebanon, it has been also suspected of using the country’s airspace to conduct airstrikes against neighboring Syria on several occasions since March 2011.

## Saudi Arabia Reports 2 More MERS Deaths



*Saudi Arabian residents wear masks to help prevent infection by MERS.*

RIYADH (Press TV) – **Saudi Arabia’s Health Ministry has reported two more deaths from the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus**

(MERS-CoV), amid a United Nations’ investigation over the recent surge in the kingdom.

The ministry said on Saturday that

some 57 people contracted MERS in the kingdom since the start of February, marking one of the highest monthly rates since the virus first emerged in humans in 2012.

It added that a total of 902 people had contracted MERS in Saudi Arabia, though 490 have recovered.

The MERS virus death toll has risen to 385 in Saudi Arabia, the ministry said.

An international team of UN human and animal health experts recently flew to Saudi Arabia to investigate the surge in MERS cases.

“We are all very aware of this surge in cases,” said spokesperson of the World Health Organization-led team, Fadela Chaib, adding that “we still need to understand more about what is happening.”

The international team – including experts from the WHO, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and the Paris-based World Organization for Animal Health – met with scientists and doctors.

MERS was first discovered in September 2012 in a Qatari man who had traveled to Saudi Arabia.

The disease, which causes coughing, fever and pneumonia, does not appear to be as contagious as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), which infected over 8,000 people and killed about 10 percent of them more than a decade ago.

In addition to Saudi Arabia, which is worst hit by the virus, MERS has been reported in 16 other countries including some Persian Gulf states, France, Germany, Italy, Tunisia and Britain.

## Sanctions... (Continued From Page One)

establishment of peace, tranquility and equality.

Delegates from 58 countries and international bodies, including 31 science ministers of the NAM member states, are attending the Tehran conference.

The aim of the gathering is to formulate policies for scientific and technological development of NAM countries.

Addressing the meeting, Rouhani said no one can claim Iran’s nuclear program has a non-peaceful nature.

Separately, Rouhani dismissed as a “big lie” Western allegations that the country has been pursuing a secret nuclear program, saying that Tehran has shown the transparency of its peaceful nuclear work to the world.

“That they say Iran has had secret activities in this respect is a big lie; We first turned to Europeans to get the uranium enrichment technology; If we wanted to conceal our activities we wouldn’t raise these issues with a Western country,” he said at a conference marking National Engineers’ Day.

He said the European country refused to give Iran the technology to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes. “We also discussed the issue with Russia for a long time.... But finally they didn’t accept to give us enrichment technology; We also talked with Chinese and all these show that we have not concealed our work; We talked to the whole world and each country made an excuse,” Rouhani said.

Rouhani further hailed efforts made by Iranian scientists and engineers in achieving the uranium enrichment know-how and installing centrifuges.

President Rouhani further praised efforts by Iranian diplomats present in the nuclear talks with the P5+1 group over Tehran’s nuclear program.

Rouhani said the make-up of the country’s nuclear negotiating team shows Tehran’s determination to have constructive interaction with the world, describing the country’s nuclear negotiators as the soldiers of Iran’s diplomatic frontline.

traveling at 4,500 meters per second, with a range of 2,500 km (1,500 miles), according to the company that makes it, Almaz-Antey.

The S-300 missiles have a 125-mile range and Russia has stoked tensions with the West by trying to sell them to Syria and other Middle Eastern countries.

Chemezov told reporters conflicts in the Middle East had helped boost Russian arm sales, according to TASS.

“I don’t conceal it, and everyone understands this, the more conflicts there are, the more they buy off weapon from us. Volumes are continuing to grow despite sanctions. Mainly, it’s Latin America and the Middle East,” he was quoted as saying.

Last year, Russian foreign arm sales totaled \$13 billion, he added.

Chemezov was sanctioned by the U.S. government in April over Russia’s role in the Ukraine crisis.

## Nuclear... (Continued From Page One)

As long as this thinking persists it will be very hard, difficult to reach a settlement.”

Iran’s Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who is taking part in the discussions, said “key questions” remained unresolved.

“All parties are negotiating with seriousness and determination, but we haven’t found solutions to key questions,” he told Iranian national television late Sunday.

“The gap still exists, differences exist.”

Before the talks, Kerry also acknowledged that there were “still significant gaps. There is still a distance to travel”.

U.S. and Iranian diplomats have been meeting in Geneva since Friday, and senior negotiators from the so-called P5+1 group of Britain, China, France, Russia, the United States and Germany and held parallel negotiations with Tehran on Sunday to help drive the talks forward.

In a sign of the growing push for an accord, U.S. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz is taking part in the talks for the first time, as is Ali Akbar Salehi, the director of the Iranian Atomic Energy Organization.

Both men led five hours of negotiations on Saturday, before Kerry’s arrival.

But Kerry played down the importance of adding new negotiators to the mix, saying Moniz was present because of the “technical” nature of the discussions.

Zarif said the inclusion of Moniz and Salehi reflected a need “for higher level people with all-embracing command over all issues”.

The presence of a close aide and the brother of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Hussein Fereydoon, meant better “coordination with the president”, he added.

The talks took place behind closed doors with no customary photo opportunity for journalists covering the meetings.

Kerry warned Saturday that U.S. President Barack Obama had “no inclination whatsoever to extend these talks beyond the period that has been set out”.

Ali Akbar Velayati, the diplomatic advisor to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, shot back Sunday that “if American leaders don’t want to negotiate, it’s up to them, but they were the ones who were after negotiations”.

Araqchi said Iran will quit the nuclear talks with the P5+1 should the other parties try to impose their will on the Islamic Republic.

He said the nuclear negotiations should be geared toward meeting the interests of both sides and a win-win solution.

“If that does not happen, and if one side attempts to impose its will in the talks through means other than negotiating, we, too, will certainly be under no compunction to leave the negotiating table,” Araqchi said.

“But”, he said, “that is not the situation we are in right now.”

He further said that it has been proven to the United States and the other members of P5+1 that “political and media pressure can by no means cause the Islamic Republic of Iran to alter its method, demands and position in the talks”.

Araqchi said the remarks by Kerry will have no effects on the talks, and that Iran will continue the talks as long as the language of respect is used during the talks.

He also evaluated the atmosphere of the talks as being “constructive and useful”.

Kerry had said Obama believed it was “imperative to be able to come to a fundamental political outline and agreement within the time space that we have left”.

But Zarif said Rouhani would not accept a small, short-term agreement, nor a broad accord that left room for interpretation.

## Russia... (Continued From Page One)

United States of America and some countries on the continuation of this wrong policy and their insistence on a wrong approach will bear no fruit but destruction and victimization of more innocent people,” Afkham added.

She said the UN silence on this move by the U.S. and some regional countries is in contravention of the body’s efforts to stop conflicts in Syrian city of Aleppo.

Afkham also urged the U.S. and its allies to respect the UN Security Council’s resolutions, particularly the recently-approved Resolution 2199, and take serious action to stop financial and logistic support to terrorists.

traveling at 4,500 meters per second, with a range of 2,500 km (1,500 miles), according to the company that makes it, Almaz-Antey.

The S-300 missiles have a 125-mile range and Russia has stoked tensions with the West by trying to sell them to Syria and other Middle Eastern countries.

Chemezov told reporters conflicts in the Middle East had helped boost Russian arm sales, according to TASS.

“I don’t conceal it, and everyone understands this, the more conflicts there are, the more they buy off weapon from us. Volumes are continuing to grow despite sanctions. Mainly, it’s Latin America and the Middle East,” he was quoted as saying.

Last year, Russian foreign arm sales totaled \$13 billion, he added.

Chemezov was sanctioned by the U.S. government in April over Russia’s role in the Ukraine crisis.

## Zionists... (Continued From Page One)

the Iranian target”. But the NSA’s signals intelligence chief “has been opposed to such a blanket arrangement, and this specific trilateral should not be interpreted as a broad change of approach. In other areas, NSA and CCHQ have agreed to continue to share information gleaned from the respective bilateral relationships with ISNU”.

The document also discusses U.S.-British successes against Iran.

“NSA has successfully worked multiple high-priority surges with GCHQ” during “the storming of the British Embassy in Tehran; Iran’s discovery of computer network exploitation tools on their networks in 2012 and 2013; and support to policymakers during the multiple rounds of P5 plus 1 negotiation on Iran’s nuclear program”, the document states.

It adds that Iranian denial-of-service cyberattacks started in August 2012 against oil company Saudi Aramco and U.S. financial institutions. According to signals intelligence, these attacks were a response to Western operations against Iran’s nuclear program, and senior Iranian officials were aware of these attacks.

Tehran has denied such accusations.

The NSA said it could not rule out such operations by Iran in the future “especially in the face of increased international pressure” on the country.

According to the document, the NSA’s emergency plan in preparation for a crisis with Iran has been coordinated throughout the entire U.S. military and intelligence community.

The memo was drawn up during the tenure of the previous NSA chief, Gen. Keith Alexander. It addresses 8200’s operations when the unit was led by Brig. Gen. (res.) Nadav Zafir and military intelligence was led by Maj. Gen. Aviv Kochavi.

In a previous document released by Snowden in 2013, operational, technological and budgetary cooperation between the NSA and 8200 was discussed.

## Larijani... (Continued From Page 2)

United States of America and some countries on the continuation of this wrong policy and their insistence on a wrong approach will bear no fruit but destruction and victimization of more innocent people,” Afkham added.

She said the UN silence on this move by the U.S. and some regional countries is in contravention of the body’s efforts to stop conflicts in Syrian city of Aleppo.

Afkham also urged the U.S. and its allies to respect the UN Security Council’s resolutions, particularly the recently-approved Resolution 2199, and take serious action to stop financial and logistic support to terrorists.