

# Zionist Regime Bars Gaza Athletes From Taking Part in West Bank Marathon

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – **The Zionist regime has barred over 100 Palestinian athletes from the besieged Gaza Strip to participate in the fourth annual Palestine Marathon in Bethlehem, in the West Bank, by refusing to issue them permits to exit the Palestinian enclave.**

The Zionist regime’s measure was harshly slammed on Friday by the marathon’s organizer, I’tidal Abdul-Ghani, as “a blatant violation of all international laws and norms pertaining to athletes’ freedom of movement.”

Among the 103 athletes who were prevented to take part in the contest was star runner Nader Masri, who represented Palestine at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.

Others on the banned list were members of the campaign group Right to Movement

and Right to Play — the organizing body behind the event, as well as members of the Palestine Olympic Committee.

The symbolic event is a 42km (26-mile) run organized every year to protest the restrictions of movement imposed by the Tel Aviv regime on Palestinians across the occupied territories.

The marathon begins at the Church of the Nativity in the old city area of Bethlehem and runs the length of the city, as well as past two Palestinian refugee camps and along the Israeli-built separation wall also known as the apartheid wall.

Thousands of Palestinians and foreigners took part in the event, according to local press outlets, which noted that it was the third time the Israeli regime barred Gaza runners from participating in the marathon.

Meanwhile, the UN’s coordinator for humanitarian aid Robert Piper was quoted in local media as saying, “As many of us join this celebratory event, we remain acutely aware of the many barriers to freedom of movement faced by Palestinians every day.”

The statement highlighted the extensive movement restrictions imposed on Palestinians, which it said “permeate almost all facets of everyday life and continue to separate Palestinians and fragment the territory.”

It further pointed to the Israeli regime’s separation wall, checkpoints, roadblocks, as well as its use of travel permits and shutdown of entire areas, while also blasting the crippling eight-year blockade of the densely-populated Gaza by the Zionist regime.

## Egypt Army Kills Scores of Militants in Sinai Peninsula

CAIRO (Press TV) – **The Egyptian military says it has killed scores of militants in the restive province of North Sinai, located in the country’s extreme northeast.**

In an official statement on Friday, the Egyptian army said as many as 65 militants had been killed during military operations in the cities of Sheikh Zuweid and Rafah in the province, Egyptian daily Al-Ahram reported on its website.

Also on Friday, at least four policemen were killed when their vehicle went over a roadside bomb in el-Arish, the province’s capital. Several other policemen and civilians were reportedly injured in the incident.

The latest instance of violence



*A member of the Egyptian security forces stands guard next to a damaged bus following a roadside bomb blast which on the outskirts of North Sinai’s provincial capital of Arish.*

comes after a military spokesman announced last October that

Egyptian forces had gained “full control” over the three cities fol-

lowing successful raids against “terrorist strongholds” and weapon caches, the paper added.

Over the past several years, Egyptian troops have been engaged in efforts to quell rampant militancy across the Sinai Peninsula.

The battle has led to the deaths of hundreds of troops and militants, including those with the Takfiri Velayat Sinai group.

Previously known as Ansar Bait al-Maqdis, the outfit has pledged allegiance to the ISIL terror group, which is mainly active in Iraq and Syria.

In October 2014, a state of emergency was declared across the whole peninsula following a deadly terrorist attack that claimed the lives of 33 soldiers.

## Bahrainis Protest Ahead of Formula One race

MANAMA (Press TV) – **Bahraini people have held an anti-regime demonstration in the Persian Gulf kingdom ahead of the upcoming Formula One Grand Prix.**

The demonstrators carried anti-Formula One banners reading, “Racing on Persecution” and chanted slogans against the race during their march in the village of Diraz, west of the capital, Manama, after Friday prayers.

The second round of the Formula 1 season is scheduled to take place in Bahrain this weekend.

Such protests have been held annually in recent years ahead of the major sport event.

Bahrainis slam the hosting of the Formula One race as a failed attempt to restore Manama’s international image.

Manama hopes the event will highlight progress and improvements in the country’s human rights situation.

The 2011 race was canceled amid a heavy crackdown on pro-democracy protests in the kingdom which left many people dead.

On the same occasion, Amnesty International condemned the Bahraini

regime on Friday.

“Behind the fast cars and the victory laps lies a government that is tightening its chokehold on any remnant of dissent in the country by stepping up arrests, intimidation and harassment of political opposition, critics and activists,” said James Lynch, Amnesty International’s Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa.

“The alarming erosion of human rights in Bahrain in recent years means that anyone who dares to criticize the authorities or call for reform risks severe punishment,” he said.

The UK-based rights group also denounced the Bahraini authorities for revoking the nationalities of many Bahrainis, describing it as an “unlawful measure to silence dissent.”

It also called on Bahrain to “to mark the Grand Prix by immediately and unconditionally releasing all prisoners of conscience held solely for peacefully expressing their views.”

“The modest reforms introduced after the 2011 uprising have demonstrably failed to live up to the hopes and promises they raised to protect and promote human rights,” Amnesty said.

## Zionist Police to Investigate Palestinian Who Filmed al-Khalil Killing

WEST BANK (FNA) – **The Zionist regime’s military medic caught on video shooting and killing a wounded Palestinian will no longer face a murder charge, and is simply confined to his base pending lesser charges of manslaughter, which also seem increasingly unlikely to stick.**

In the end, the only person who gets in real trouble over the incident might be Emad abu-Shamsiyah, the Palestin-

ian member of leftist NGO B’tselem, who is being investigated by Zionist police for filming the incident in the first place, antiwar reported.

Though filming the extrajudicial execution does not appear illegal under Israeli law, far right activists who have lionized the medic as a national hero have vilified Shamsiyah for filming in the first place, complaining to the police that

the fact he was in a major Palestinian city (Hebron) to film the military killing someone proved he, and B’tselem in general, were secretly in league with “terrorists”.

B’tselem is harshly critical of the Israeli settler movement, and has long been a documenter of the excesses of the Zionist occupation. With the Zionist regime’s far-right government increasingly turning on NGOs

seen as unfriendly to the settlement enterprise, they seem increasingly a target.

None more than Shamsiyah, however, who has repeatedly received death threats since filming the killing, and last weekend had a group of settlers attack his home, throwing rocks and chanting “death to Emad”. Israeli soldiers arrived at the scene, but did not interfere with the settlers’ attack.

## U.S. Moves... (Continued From Page One)

part of the concept for the overthrow of Assad, and Europe’s strategy of open borders plays to the U.S. interests in the hands, he has said in an interview with the Greek news portal The Press Project.

“Because of the war, especially the middle class leaves -- doctors, civil servants, lawyers, engineers, precisely those professional groups that you need to keep a country at all functional,” he said.

### Oil Collapse and Saudi Connection

The war in Syria serves, among other things, to keep the oil price down. Saudi Arabia has been behind the oil collapse by flooding the market.

According to Pulitzer-prize winning investigative journalist Seymour Hersh, following the US invasion of Iraq, Saudi Arabia persuaded Washington to crack down on Iran and its allies in the region, most notably Syria.

“The Saudis have considerable financial means, and have deep relations with the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafis,” Hersh wrote in his article for The New Yorker in 2007.

### U.S., Salafists Teamed Up

In August 2012, the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) shed some light on who exactly was behind the Syria unrest: Salafists, the Muslim Brotherhood and Al-Qaeda in Iraq.

“Internally, events are taking a clear sectarian direction. The Salafists, the Muslim Brotherhood and AQI (Al-Qaeda in Iraq) are the major forces driving the insurgency in Syria... AQI supported the Syrian opposition from the beginning, both ideologically and through the media” the DIA report read.

In 2015, former DIA head Michael Flynn confirmed in an interview with Al Jazeera that it was a “willful decision” of the Obama administration to team up with Salafists and Al-Qaeda in Syria back in 2012.

“I don’t know that they turned a blind eye, I think it was a decision. I think it was a willful decision,” Flynn said.

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

of the current state of the Greek economy, with the IMF worried that estimates drawn up by the EU and Greece do not add up.

In the Wikileaks transcript, the IMF officials allegedly say Greece’s leftist government is “not even getting close” to accepting their views.

“(The Greeks) don’t have any incentive and they know that the (European) Commission is willing to compromise, so that is the problem,” Velculescu is cited as saying.

Athens is under pressure to address the large number of non-performing loans burdening Greek banks and to push forward with a pension and tax overhaul resisted by farmers and white-collar staff.

Tsipras has accused the IMF of employing “stalling tactics” and “arbitrary” estimates to delay a reforms review crucial to unlock further bailout cash.

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

China’s overwhelming military advantage by improving ties with the United States and Japan.

While it has acquired new fighter jets and surplus U.S. naval ships, the Southeast Asian nation still has far to go, De Castro warned.

China’s defense budget dwarfs that of the Philippines and Beijing is this year set to outspend its smaller neighbor by a factor of around 60.

The Philippines is also increasing its military engagements with the U.S. with the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, which took effect in January.

Under the deal, U.S. troops will rotate through five military camps including two air bases that are strategically positioned near the South China Sea.

“It is very apparent that the thrust of (the agreement) is air power,” said former national security adviser Roilo Golez.

Australia, which recently criticized China’s assertiveness in the disputed waters, is sending 80 troops to join parachute drills as part of the maneuvers, Sayson said.

Obama this week confronted Chinese President Xi Jinping over Beijing’s actions in the disputed seas.

Tensions have flared between the superpowers since the U.S. sent warships close to disputed islands twice in the past six months.