

UN Yemen Envoy Proposes Peace Deal Roadmap

NEW YORK (Press TV) – Following two months of negotiations between warring parties, the UN special envoy to Yemen has proposed a roadmap to end the Saudi Arabian onslaught in the conflict-hit country.

“The roadmap provides for the implementation of the security arrangements specified in Security Council Resolution 2216 and the establishment of a national unity government,” said Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed during a briefing to the UN Security Council from Kuwait on Tuesday.

Delegations of the Saudi-backed former regime and Yemen’s Ansarullah movement have been engaged in talks in Kuwait for a peaceful solution to the conflict.

“In short, the general atmosphere continues to be positive although difficulties remain which need to be addressed,” he said. “The delegations have responded positively to the proposals, but have not yet reached agreement on the sequencing of the different steps provided in the roadmap.”

Saudi Arabia launched its military ag-



A Yemeni boy walks amid the ruins of a school and a bowling club hit by a Saudi airstrike, in the capital Sana'a.

gression against Yemen on March 26, 2015, in a bid to bring former President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi — who is a staunch ally of Riyadh — back to power

and defeat the Ansarullah movement.

More than 9,400 people have been killed and at least 16,000 others injured since the onset of the aggression. The

Saudi strikes have also taken a heavy toll on the country’s facilities and infrastructure, destroying many hospitals, schools, and factories.

Iraqi Troops Free Ezadi, Christian Women Abducted by ISIL in Fallujah

BAGHDAD (FNA) – Iraqi security forces released a significant number of hostages and civilians abducted by ISIL among them dozens of Ezadis and Christians as they are clearing more districts in the newly liberated city of Fallujah, an Iraqi military official said.

“Many of freed ISIL prisoners are civilians from Mosul and even Syrian women,” Zulfikar Baldavi, the head of the Iraqi volunteer force of “Hashd al-Sha’abi” said, Sputnik reported.

The head of the Iraqi popular force supporting the Iraqi Army in the operation against ISIL in the city of

Fallujah added that still some ISIL remnants are active in Fallujah as “everyone knows that the city of Fallujah has lots of large tunnels, alleys and other places where there can be resistance”.

Iraqi security forces almost completely recaptured Fallujah from ISIL. They also took control of the administration buildings in the city center. But the terrorists are still keeping the resistance, holding individual streets and houses, Zulfikar Baldavi, said.

“The city of Fallujah has returned under the control of the Iraqi armed

forces, which include the federal police forces and popular forces of Hashd al-Sha’abi.

In military terms, the city is completely released as Iraqi forces are present in all major districts,” Baldavi said.

“Right now there is an ongoing operation to clean up the last strongholds of the extremist group. There is a continuous search for ISIL terrorists in tunnels, buildings and other secret locations.”

The head of the popular force also explained that the operation North of the

province of Salaheddin, on the border with Nineveh province, has some distinct features, since the operation is not occurring at the initiative of the Iraqi government and the country’s Ministry of Defense.

“We have received information that this operation, which its main goal seemingly is to liberate the military airfield Qayyarah Airfield, is taking place at the initiative of the United States, as US forces want to assign this base to themselves in the future and make it a place of basing their aircraft,” Baldavi concluded.

Opposition Leader:

Bahraini Nation Seeks Annihilation of Illegitimate Al Khalifa Regime

MANAMA (FNA) – A prominent Bahraini opposition leader rapped the al-Khalifa regime for stripping its own people of citizenship, and said such an illegitimate regime doesn’t deserve to rule the nation anymore.

“The Bahraini revolutionaries want not only an elected government but also annihilation of the dictatorial al-Khalifa regime in the first place,” Ali al-Quraifi told FNA on Wednesday.

Noting that the Bahraini regime is practicing inhumane measures against all walks of life in the country, he said, “Revoking Sheikh Issa Qassim (the senior Shiite cleric) of citizenship was

a US-Saudi plot to put out the fire of Bahrain’s revolution.”

Quraifi reminded al-Khalifa’s crackdown on the opposition for years, and said a regime which has given every authority to its mercenaries to commit any crimes against the opposition and appreciates them on different occasions doesn’t deserve to remaining in power.

Bahrain’s Interior Ministry announced in a statement on Monday the country’s top Shiite cleric Ayatollah Sheikh Issa Qassim was stripped of his citizenship.

“Isa Ahmed Qassim has been stripped of his Bahraini citizenship,” Bahrain state news agency cited the ministry’s

statement, referring to the country’s most senior Shiite Muslim cleric in Bahrain.

The latest move by the Bahrain regime against the country’s main opposition figures came as the Al-Khalifah regime is exerting mounting pressure on the opposition.

Opposition members feel the government is willing to accelerate its crackdown on dissent because it believes it will only face minimal censure through statements of concern in the US and Europe. Both the US and UK have large naval bases in Bahrain.

Last week, the government suspended

the main Shia opposition party, al-Wefaq, accusing it of having links to foreign terrorists and inciting hatred. Sheikh Ali Salman, al-Wefaq’s secretary-general, was arrested in 2014 on charges of inciting violence. His sentence was doubled to nine years on appeal last month.

The cabinet decided to revoke the citizenship of Sheikh Isa — an indigenous Bahraini who applied for nationality to get a passport in the 1960s — after a presentation by the interior ministry. The lack of judicial oversight raised concerns among rights groups.

UK ...

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Earlier this week, British-based campaign group, the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD), said the arrest would “escalate tensions” and could “lead to violence,” while Human Rights Watch said it took the country “into the darkest days” since 2011, when demonstrators took to the streets to demand greater political rights and an end to discrimination against the Shia majority.

Sayed Alwadeai, the director of advocacy at BIRD, said: “Bahrain’s ally the UK did not even postpone a meeting on military cooperation, let alone issue a statement on this gross repression of Bahrain’s civil society. Britain is giving Bahrain a green light for repression.”

The meeting came on the same day that a Bahraini court extended the detention of human rights defender Nabeel Rajab, who was re-arrested on 13 June for “spreading false news and rumors about the internal situation in a bid to discredit Bahrain.”

It also comes amid continued scrutiny over the close relationship between London and Manama in the wake of a deal to establish a new British Royal Navy base in the country and revelations earlier this year that British naval commandoes were training Bahraini security forces in sniping techniques.

Amnesty International UK’s head government affairs, Allan Hogarth, told MEE: “Since its shiny new naval base in Bahrain was announced, the UK has apparently been prioritizing its military ties rather than rocking the boat over the Bahrain’s increasingly dismal human rights record.”

“With ongoing arrests, a long-running crackdown on protests, frequent reports of torture in custody and a host of prisoners of conscience now behind bars, the situation in Bahrain gets worse by the week.

“The UK needs to completely re-evaluate its relationship with Bahrain. Ministers, diplomats and senior military figures like Sir Nicholas should all be addressing Bahrain’s human rights situation, including by speaking out publicly.”

Following General Houghton’s visit, the British Foreign Office told MEE that it was “concerned by reports that the nationality of Bahraini Shia cleric Sheikh Isa Qassim is being revoked.”

North ...

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In April, North Korea said it had successfully tested a new high-power engine for an intercontinental missile and released images that appeared to show the test-firing of a double-engine. “The North Koreans are making progress toward a workable Musudan. If we do nothing, they will move on to a missile, using the same technology, that can reach the U.S.,” said Jeffrey Lewis, an arms control expert at the California-based Middlebury Institute of International Studies.

North Korea has made offers to suspend its nuclear and missile program in return for a suspension of joint military drills by the U.S. and South Korea. However, Washington and Seoul insist Pyongyang must make the first move and roll back its nuclear program.

The U.S. State Department condemned Wednesday’s test in a statement and said it would raise the issue at the United Nations. North Korea is banned by UN resolutions from testing ballistic-missile technology.

South Korean President Park Geun-hye called North Korea’s missile tests “grave provocations,” while a Chinese government spokesman said all nations should try to avoid escalating tension.

North Korea has also recently tested missiles launched from submarines that, along with road-mobile missiles, have the potential to give North Korea a “second strike” capability to retaliate to an initial major attack on its military bases.

North Korea has claimed the ability to mount a nuclear weapon on a ballistic missile. In March, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called for an acceleration of missile and nuclear tests.

The Musudan’s maximum range covers U.S. bases in Japan and the Western Pacific island of Guam.

Ministry ...

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“Currently, the terrorists are being investigated, while follow-up all-out intelligence and operational activities are simultaneously underway both inside and outside the country.”

Alavi said the militants were planning remote control explosions, suicide bombings, and car bombings against bustling areas.

“They had identified 50 targets for explosive attacks and had prepared the devices needed for some of the targets, while either preparing or receiving the rest,” he said.

The minister said some 100 kilograms of explosives and bomb-making materials have so far been seized. Security forces also intercepted two tons of explosives during “complex and covert intelligence operations” before they could reach the attackers.

The minister urged the public to notify the ministry’s press office of any suspicious activities via the (021) 311 emergency hotline.

On Monday, Iran’s Intelligence Ministry released a statement about the foiled bombing plots by Takfiri-Wahabi groups.

The intelligence minister also announced in May that 20 terrorist cells that had planned to detonate bombs and cause insecurity across the country had been dismantled.

Wahhabism is the radical ideology dominating Saudi Arabia and freely preached by clerics in the Arab country. It also forms the ideology of Daesh, which has claimed responsibility for scores of deadly attacks throughout the world, mainly in Iraq and Syria.

Iran’s Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Shamkhani said on Monday that the attacks were planned for the holy month of Ramadan.

“Wherever it may occur in Iran, any suspicious move will be swiftly detected; this is thanks to the presence of the people and capable and experienced organizations,” he said.

British ...

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“While preparations for the new route have generally been progressing well, some technical issues have arisen which makes it sensible for us to put back the launch of flights from mid-July to September 1,” the spokesperson said.

“Customers who were booked to fly before September 1 will be notified of their flight cancellation and offered a number of options, including re-routing on alternative dates, full refunds or rebooking them to fly with other airlines. We look forward to opening the route in September.”

BA is not the only airline to seek to resume flights to Iran.

In April Air France renewed its Paris to Tehran route.

Iran’s appeal includes striking architecture, atmospheric markets, rugged scenery and a growing number of art galleries and museums.

David McGuinness, director of tour operator Travel the Unknown said that the Islamic Republic had become one of their busiest destinations of 2016.

The Foreign Office partly its travel advice to Iran last July, largely because of “decreasing hostility under President Rouhani’s government,” but still warns against all travel to areas that border Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

People Protest Against Turkey’s Arrest Of Activists Over Terror Charges



Protesters hold pictures of jailed RSF representative Erol Önderoğlu, journalist Ahmet Nesin and rights activist and academic Şebnem Korur Fincancı and a banner, reading “The free press will not be silenced”, as they shout slogans in front of the pro-Kurdish Özgür Gündem newspaper’s headquarters.

ANKARA (Dispatches) – The arrest of three prominent Turkish activists over terror-related charges has sparked

protests in Istanbul.

On Tuesday, some 200 people gathered outside the offices of Özgür

Gündem pro-Kurdish newspaper, chanting “The free press cannot be silenced,” as riot police stood on alert.

On Monday, Turkey arrested Reporters Without Borders (RSF) representative Erol Önderoğlu, author Ahmet Nesin, and the president of Turkey’s Human Rights Foundation, Şebnem Korur Fincancı.

The three took the symbolic control of pro-Kurdish newspaper Özgür Gündem, much to the anger of Turkish authorities who had the daily in their crosshairs for years.

“The court, directed by the palace and acting on its orders, once again has signed its name to a shameful decision and arrested our three friends,” said İnan Kızılkaya, one of the daily’s editors, referring to the office of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

According to Önderoğlu, the

prosecutor in the case demanded that he and the two other campaigners be charged for spreading terrorist propaganda.

“The jailing of Önderoğlu and (Fincancı), two of Turkey’s most respected rights defenders, is a chilling sign human rights groups are the next target,” said Hugh Williamson, the Europe and Central Asia director at Human Rights Watch.

For the past two years, Turkey has been tightening its grip on media, especially those sympathizing with the country’s Kurdish militants, known as the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK). The military has launched a massive crackdown against the PKK in areas close to borders with Iraq and Syria in the south. Offshoots of the PKK have responded by carrying out deadly attacks in the capital Ankara and in Istanbul.