

**'Zionist Regime Hacked Lebanese Phones'**  
 BEIRUT (Dispatches) – Lebanon has held the Zionist regime responsible for a recent hacking into the country's telecom network during a speech by Secretary General of Hezbollah resistance movement Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah.  
 During the Thursday speech to honor Hezbollah's top military commander Mustafa Badreddine, calls and messages were sent to thousands of Lebanese people accusing Nasrallah of ordering Badreddine's murder.  
 Following the incident, Hezbollah said, "An unknown source manipulated the landlines of Hezbollah's press office, calling a number of citizens and sending text messages," which "included insults against the resistance and its leader."

*Thought for Today*  
 Whoever warns you against sins and vices is like the one who gives you good tidings.  
 Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

## On Nakba Anniversary Eve

# Worldwide Protests Held to Draw Attention to Palestinian Plight



*Demonstrators protest before Zionist troops in the West Bank village of Nabi Salih, north of Ramallah, on May 12, 2017.*

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – People have held demonstrations in several parts of the world ahead of the 69th anniversary of the Nakba Day in solidarity with Palestinians who are enduring decades of oppression and occupation by the Zionist regime. People rallied in Berlin in remembrance of the Day of Catastrophe, marking the expulsion of Palestinians from their lands by

the occupying regime 69 years ago. The occasion is commemorated annually on May 15. The protesters chanted slogans such as "Free Palestine" and "Palestine will be free, from the river to the sea," referring to the territory spanning the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea. They further carried banners reading, "Jews for the Palestinian

right of return" and "Freedom to Palestine." "We are also here to make the Palestinian opposition visible in the streets," demonstrator Martin Suchanek of Nakba Day Alliance said. The day refers to the forcible expulsion of some 750,000 Palestinians from their lands in 1948 and their scattering across refugee

camp in the occupied West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and neighboring countries. Now, over five million Palestinians are estimated to be displaced across the world. Elsewhere, in the Canadian city of Toronto, pro-Palestinian protesters gathered outside the Zionist regime's consulate in support of the Palestinian prisoners on hunger strike in the regime's jails. One of the protesters underlined the importance "to pressure our Canadian government to do more than what they are currently doing in regards to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict." People are "specifically protesting for the rights of the Palestinian prisoners who unfortunately do experience oppression under the Israeli occupation," the protester added. Since April 17, more than 1,600 Palestinian prisoners have gone on hunger strike to express their outrage at harsh conditions in Israeli jails. The Palestinian Prisoners' Club, however, has put the figure far higher, saying more than 3,000 prisoners are taking part in the strike. The protest action, dubbed the Freedom and Dignity Strike, is led by a jailed leader of the Palestinian Fatah movement, Marwan Barghouti.

## Syrian Army Retakes Most of Terrorist-Held District Near Damascus



*Families of terrorists gather at a staging point in the Barzeh District of the capital Damascus on May 8, 2017, as they wait to be evacuated.*

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – The Syrian army and its allies are on the verge of completely seizing the terrorist-held district of Qaboun on the edge of the capital Damascus following over two months of aerial strikes and artillery shelling, terrorists and state media said on Sunday. The neighborhood lies in the northeastern edge of the capital that has been mostly reduced to rubble after around 80 days in which it was struck by hundreds of aerial strikes and missiles. The army had resumed its intensive bombardment in the district on Wednesday after a one-day ultimatum it gave the terrorists mainly drawn from the area to surrender and agree to evacuate to terrorist-held areas in northern Syria. Hundreds of terrorists and their families had been evacuated this week from the adjacent Barzeh district after terrorists there decided to lay down their arms and leave to Idlib province. They included some from Qaboun. There were unconfirmed reports from a local source in the district that an agreement had been reached to evacuate the terrorists from Qaboun. About 1,500 terrorists and their families are now trapped in a nearly one square kilometer zone. A news bulletin on state television said evacuations had begun, quoting the governor of Damascus. No other details were provided on the numbers. The development came after Syrian government forces managed

to retake a military air base in the country's northern province of Aleppo from Daesh terrorists as they continue to score territorial gains against the extremists across the country. The director of the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, Rami Abdel Rahman, said Syrian troopers could establish control over the small al-Jarrah airport on Saturday after heavy fighting with Daesh members. "The majority of the extremists have withdrawn, and government forces are carrying out clearing operations in the airport and engaged in limited clashes with remaining Daesh elements," he added. A military source, speaking on condition of anonymity, also confirmed the recapture of the base. "The Syrian army has completed its capture of Jarrah airport and a number of the surrounding villages," he said. "It will continue its advances into the areas held by the terrorist organization and ... expand the areas it controls in eastern Aleppo Province," the source pointed out. Syrian government forces also uncovered a strategically important chain of tunnels and trenches, which foreign-sponsored terrorists used to transport ammunition, food, water, and armor in the area. Syria has been battling foreign-backed terrorism since March 2011. United Nations Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura estimated last August that more than 400,000 people had been killed in the crisis until then.

## As Battle Approaches Endgame Iraqi Forces Attack Daesh in Mosul

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – Iraqi forces pushed deeper into the last pocket of Mosul controlled by Daesh terrorists on Sunday as the battle for the city approaches an end after seven months of grueling urban combat. The terrorists have now been dislodged from all but a handful of districts in the western half of Mosul including the Old City, where Daesh is expected to make its last stand, taking advantage of narrow streets and its dense population. Brigadier General Yahya Rasoul said the area controlled by Daesh was no more than 9 percent of west Mosul, which is bisected by the River Tigris. "It's a very small area," he told Reuters. "God willing, this is the final phase." The elite Counter Terrorism Service (CTS) stormed the Ureibi and Rifaie districts at dawn on Sunday, according to a statement from the Joint Operations Command.

At the same time, the army's ninth division and the Interior Ministry's elite Emergency Response Division attacked the Daesh bastion of 17 Tammouz. "Daesh is drawing its last dying breath," the commander of the ninth division, Lieutenant General Qasim Nazzal, told state television on Sunday. "Daesh fighters are broken and quickly retreating from fronts." Vastly outnumbered by the forces arrayed against them, the terrorists are fighting back with car bombs and snipers embedded among hundreds of thousands of civilians they are effectively holding hostage. Conditions in the shrinking area under terrorist control are increasingly desperate as civilians resort to eating weeds and many are killed under heavy bombardment. The number of people fleeing Mosul has more than doubled to about 10,000 a day since Friday, according



*A member of Iraqi Rapid response forces takes position during clashes with Daesh terrorists in northwest of Mosul, Iraq, May 9, 2017.*

to Iraqi government figures. Defense analyst and former general Jasim al-Bahadli said the strategy adopted by Iraqi commanders was to splinter the remaining terrorists into smaller groups and attack them

on multiple fronts to disrupt their command and control. "By taking back all the districts surrounding the Old City, the militants will have no chance to receive any back-up or reinforcements," he said.

## U.S. President Mulls More Troops for Afghanistan

KABUL (Dispatches) – U.S. President Donald Trump is weighing up whether to send more troops to Afghanistan as officials say the political and security situation will "almost certainly" continue to worsen in the war-torn country. Trump's advisers are reportedly urging him to allow some 3,000 to 5,000 additional troops to be sent to Afghanistan, adding to the 8,400

already stationed in the country. Trump is expected to make the decision later this month during his travel to NATO in Brussels, and Pentagon chief Jim Mattis said he would give his own recommendation "very shortly." According to The New York Times, Trump is close to signing off on the recommendation, which is the result of a broad review by the Pentagon,

the State Department, intelligence community and other government agencies on the Afghan war. "What we will have at the end of this next few weeks here is an opportunity for a much more effective strategy for the problem set in Afghanistan, Pakistan and the region broadly," said Trump's national security adviser, H.R. McMaster. The U.S. officials say the American

military needs a bigger role in Afghanistan to push the Taliban militant group back to the negotiating table. They have also called for authority to target Taliban leaders with airstrikes. Dan Coats, Trump's director of national intelligence, said "we assess that the Taliban is likely to continue to make gains, especially in rural areas." "Unless we change something... the

situation will continue to deteriorate and we'll lose all the gains that we've invested in over the last several years," Defense Intelligence Agency chief General Vincent Stewart told lawmakers this week. The U.S.-led occupying force officially announced to end its combat operations against the Taliban in the country at the end of 2014, and its current mission is to "train, advise,

and assist" Afghan troops. The United States -- under Republican George W. Bush's presidency -- and its allies invaded Afghanistan on October 7, 2001 as part of Washington's so-called war on terror. The offensive removed the Taliban regime from power, but after more than one and-a-half-decade, the foreign troops are still being deployed to the country.