

Yemen Warring Parties Fail to Agree Prisoner Swap Deal: UN

SANA'A (Dispatches) – Warring parties in Yemen have failed to come to agreement on a prisoner exchange after a month of discussion, the UN says.

The talks, led by the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross in Jordan since 24 January, failed to repeat a 2018 deal that saw around 15,000 prisoners changing hands.

"I am disappointed that this round of talks did not amount to what we saw in Switzerland last September which resulted in the historic release of 1056 detainees," said the world body's Yemen envoy, Martin Griffiths, in a statement.

"I urge the parties to continue their discussions and consultations, conclude the implementation of what they agreed to and expand the arrangements to release more detainees soon."

"I reiterate my call for the unconditional release of all sick, wounded, elderly and children detainees as well as detained civilians, including women and journalists,"



File photo of detainees waiting for their release by the Yemeni authorities at the central prison of capital Sana'a, Yemen, on September 30, 2019.

Griffiths said.

This round of prisoner swap talks commenced in Jordan last month with the aim of freeing a total of 300 prisoners, both from the Yemeni army and its allied fighters from Popular Committees and those militiamen loyal to Yemen's former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, whose brother is also among

the prisoners.

Abdul Qader al-Murtada, head of the Houthis' prisoner affairs committee, tweeted that the talks failed due to intransigence on the part of Hadi's representatives and his allies.

The development came as Yemeni troops continue with their offensive to take control of Ma'rib

from Hadi's militiamen. The city is Hadi's last urban stronghold in northern Yemen, which is some 120 km east of the capital Sana'a.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched the devastating war on Yemen in March 2015 in order to bring Hadi, a staunch ally of Riyadh, back to power and crush the popular Houthi Ansarullah movement.

Yemen's army and allied popular forces, however, have gone from strength to strength against the Saudi-led invaders, leaving the so-called military coalition forces bogged down in Yemen.

The Saudi war and an all-out siege on the Arabian Peninsula country have made at least 80 percent of the country's 28-million-strong population reliant on aid to survive in what the UN has called the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

UN agencies have already warned that around 400,000 Yemeni children under five are in danger of losing life this year due to acute malnutrition.

Distinguished Lebanese Political Activist Naqqash Dies

BEIRUT (Press TV) – Prominent Lebanese political activist and veteran campaigner in the Islamic resistance front, Anis al-Naqqash, has passed away at the age of 70 after contracting the new coronavirus.

Naqqash lost his brief battle to the highly contagious virus on Monday morning. He had been admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU) of a hospital in the Syrian capital city of Damascus a few days ago.

Hailing him as a "thinker and freedom fighter," the official SANA news agency said he was "admitted into intensive care two days ago... because his health deteriorated as a result of Covid-19."

His body is scheduled to be

transported to the Lebanese capital city of Beirut on Tuesday for funeral.

Naqqash was born in 1951 in Beirut. He attended al-Maqasid al-Islamiyyah School and from a young age participated in protest movements, including a demonstration in solidarity with Algerian activist Djamilia Bouhired, who opposed the French colonial rule of Algeria.

He joined the Palestinian Fatah movement in 1964, and was active in the anti-Zionist resistance front. Among his activities to boost resistance against the occupation, he trained pro-Palestinian fighters at a training camp in southern Lebanon at the time.

Naqqash even went on a hun-

ger strike to protest the inaction of Arab states, when commandos from the Zionist regime army's elite Sayeret Matkal destroyed 14 aircraft at Beirut International Airport at the evening of December 28, 1968.

When the Zionist regime invaded Lebanon in 1978, he moved to the southern part of the country and substantially helped the resistance against the aggression of southern Lebanon.

Naqqash then decided to leave Fatah and establish a Lebanese faction, but members of the Palestinian movement still paid great tribute to him despite his separation.

He established two groups in Lebanon's southern towns of Kfarchouba and Bint Jbeil,

whose members later formed the leadership of the Lebanese resistance movement.

Naqqash pledged allegiance to late founder of the Islamic Republic Imam Khomeini following the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran.

He had an important role in facilitating coordination between Palestinian resistance groups and Iranian authorities, and had strong ties with Iranian officials.

He was very close to Imad Mughniyeh, a senior commander of Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement who was assassinated in a joint U.S.-Zionist car bomb attack in the Kafar Souseh neighborhood of southwestern Damascus in February 2008.

Zionist Troops Arrest 20 Palestinians in Raids

RAMALLAH (Dispatches) – Zionist troops rounded up 20 Palestinians in overnight raids across the occupied West Bank, according to a Palestinian NGO on Monday.

"Twenty Palestinians were detained by the Israeli military last night," Amani Sarhana, a spokesperson for the Palestinian Prisoner Society, told Anadolu Agency.

She said influential figures were among those detained, but without giving any further details. "Other people were summoned by the Israeli intelligence service for questioning," Sarhana said.

According to local residents, leading Hamas member Mustafa al-Shannar, a lecturer at An-Najah University, was detained during a raid on his home in the West Bank city of Nablus.

Al-Shannar had previously been detained by the regime's military.

Hamas resistance movement has warned of plans by the occupying regime to stage a mass arrest campaign against the resistance group ahead of the Palestinian elections later this year.

Meanwhile, Arabi21.com reported on Sunday that the head of the Islamic Movement in Palestine, Sheikh Raed Salah, has been held in solitary confinement since he was jailed by the occupying regime on 15 August last year. His lawyer Khalid Zabarqeh said that Sheikh Salah has been facing harsh treatment and difficult conditions in the occupying regime's prison in the Negev Desert.

The leading Palestinian human rights activist is serving a 17-month sentence in a small, isolated cell. He is allowed out for one hour a

day. Zabarqeh described solitary confinement as a form of torture for prisoners in Israeli jails. It is, he insisted, a violation of international human rights conventions and laws, which make it illegal to arrest people for their political views or religious affiliations.

In another development, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said Zionist troops have either demolished or confiscated nearly 90 Palestinian structures in the occupied West Bank and East al-Quds, displacing about 150 Palestinians in two weeks.

In its recent bi-weekly report, the UN office said the demolitions occurred in February and displaced 146 Palestinian citizens, including 83 children, while affecting at least 330 others.

On February 3 and 8, the Zionist troops tore down 37 structures in Humsa al-Buqaia hamlet in the northern Jordan Valley, displacing 60 citizens, including 35 children, the report added.

More than 600,000 Zionists live in over 230 settlements built since the 1967 occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East al-Quds.

All settlements are illegal under international law. The UN Security Council has condemned the regime's settlement activities in the occupied territories in several resolutions.

Palestinians want the West Bank as part of a future independent Palestinian state with East al-Quds as its capital.

U.S....

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My whole world is turned upside-down."

The global death toll was approaching 2.5 million, according to Johns Hopkins.

While the count is based on figures supplied by government agencies around the world, the real death toll is believed to be significantly higher, in part because of inadequate testing and cases inaccurately attributed to other causes early on.

Despite efforts to administer coronavirus vaccines, a widely cited model by the University of Washington projects the U.S. death toll will surpass 589,000 by June 1.

"People will be talking about this decades and decades and decades from now," Fauci said on NBC's "Meet The Press."

Lawmakers...

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the government of "bypassing the law".

The IAEA, in a statement on Sunday, said it would continue "necessary verification and monitoring activities for up to three months", without specifying what those activities are.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said Monday the agreement is in complete conformity with the law passed by the Iranian parliament.

"What has been done is entirely within the framework of the parliament's legislation," he said.

Khatibzadeh said under the agreement, Iran's voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol will be suspended while some of the IAEA's necessary verification and monitoring activities will continue for up to three months.

Earlier, Iran's ambassador to international organizations in Vienna dismissed speculations that Tehran had suspended the implementation of the new law.

"The full implementation of the legislation passed by the esteemed Majlis (parliament) is a serious concern of the establishment and no one has the right to neglect it," Kazem Gharibabadi tweeted on Monday morning.

Biden's...

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Timothy Cahill said Sunday's deal marked a "major milestone" for the U.S. company.

"This agreement is in line with Lockheed Martin's strategy to expand its partnership with the kingdom by providing reliable defense and security solutions," Cahill was quoted as saying in the statement.

In 2017, Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund set up SAMI to manufacture arms locally, with the fund expecting it to become one of the world's top military companies by 2030.

The agreement was signed by SAMI CEO Walid Abukhaled and Cahill at the International Defense Exhibition and Conference (IDEX) in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

"SAMI has been exploring avenues to help build a sustainable, self-sufficient military industries sector in the Kingdom," said Abukhaled, "and our strong and enduring partnership with Lockheed Martin underpins our commitment."

Lockheed Martin is among the contractors involved in a project to install a \$15 billion Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile system in Saudi Arabia, which was part of a major arms deal approved by former U.S. pres-

ident Donald Trump in 2017.

Palestinian...

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the United Nations during the period of its occupation of the Palestinian territories throughout the period of the British Mandate, including its implementation of the Balfour Declaration," it said.

The ruling said the declaration deprived "the Palestinian people of their legal, human and political rights, and prevented them from their right to self-determination of their Palestinian lands".

The court's decision was welcomed by the Palestinians, with the head of the Supreme Islamic Authority, the preacher of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, Ikrimah Sabri, saying it "came to expose the crimes of the occupation".

The head of the National Assembly of Independents, Munib al-Masri, also described the ruling as "historic", saying it was a fair trial.

He noted that the next step would be bringing the case to the British courts.

Deputy governor of Nablus Anan al-Atire said, "What we are witnessing in terms of legal battle confirms that our people will not forget the historical injustice, and we will not forgive those who put us under this colonial occupation."

Palestinians, she said, "will only accept independence, an independent state with Jerusalem Al-Quds as its capital, the return of refugees, and the expulsion of these colonists from our land."

"We will continue the battle of struggle and resistance in all its forms."

Ayatollah...

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Iranian organizations stand united in safeguarding the country's dignity and independence against hostile plots.

The assembly further highlighted the failure of cruel U.S. sanctions and maximum pressure on the Islamic Republic, saying the Iranian nation's resistance will remain unaffected, no matter whether or not the U.S. rejoins the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The statement said any U.S. return to the JCPOA without practically lifting its sanctions would not only lack any benefit, but would also be detrimental.

The statement also called on the Iranian people to participate in the upcoming elections in June, hailing them as a venue for maximum participation of people in political and social decisions.

The next presidential election in June 2021 will be held simultaneously with council and midterm parliamentary and Assembly of Experts elections.

FM...

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at times, battalions and divisions of mercenaries come back to rejoin the nation," he said.

Al-Hakim warned that Yemen's enemies should not be allowed to block the process of the mercenaries' defection.

Amid reports of the mercenaries' mass defection, Saudi warplanes were reported by Al-Masriah to have bombarded Ma'rib's Sirwah and Medghal Districts on Monday six times.

Saudi Arabia also struck Yemen's northwestern Al-Jawf and Sa'ada Provinces, killing one civilian.

The kingdom was reported to have violated a ceasefire announced in Yemen's western lifeline port city of Al-Hudaydah as many as 209 times.

Oil Spill Off Occupied Territories Reaches South Lebanese Beaches

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – Lebanon's caretaker prime minister Hassan Diab said on Monday he was following up on an oil spill that may have originated from a ship passing near the coast in the Israeli-occupied territories and has now reached the southern shores of Lebanon.

Zionist regime officials said on Sunday they were trying to find the ship responsible

for the spill that drenched much of its Mediterranean shoreline with tar, an environmental blow that will take months or years to clean up.

Lebanon's Diab has tasked the defense minister, environment minister and the National Council for Scientific Research with the follow-up, a statement from his office said.

The sticky black deposits that showed

up on beaches were visible on Monday on beaches in a nature reserve in Tyre, south Lebanon.

The United Nations interim forces in Lebanon will be informed to draw up an official report, the statement said.

The occupying regime is looking as a possible source at a Feb. 11 oil spill from a ship passing about 50 km offshore.