

Anyone...

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you are threatening us with a thousand-fold attack, but when we struck Ayn al-Asad, our assumption and prediction was not that you would not answer, but we were absolutely assuming that you would respond, and that we had hundreds of missiles ready to fire, and if you answered, we would destroy the intended targets. "It is the same today, and if a hair sheds from an Iranian, we will blow away all your fleece and wool," the top general said, using a Persian catchphrase. "These threats are serious and we do not wage a verbal war and put everything to action," the top general added.

When Iran responded to the assassination, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said that Iran's missile attack on U.S. bases in Iraq was just "a slap".

At the time and then during a meeting with visiting Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi in Tehran in July, the Leader stressed that Iran's revenge had yet to be exacted.

"They killed your guest in your house and blatantly confessed to it," Ayatollah Khamenei told Kadhimi. Iran "will never forget this and will certainly deal a reciprocal blow to the Americans," he added.

"The Americans should know that we will strike anyone who was involved in the cowardly assassination of General Soleimani, and this is a serious message," Gen. Salami said on Saturday.

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to impose U.S. sanctions on anyone who violates the UN arms embargo on Iran in a bid to reinforce the U.S. assertion that the measure has been extended indefinitely beyond Oct. 18.

A top advisor to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said Saturday the U.S. push to reinstate the UN sanctions is part of a propaganda stunt by Trump ahead of the November presidential election.

"How do they want to trigger the snapback mechanism when they are not members of the JCPOA anymore?" Ali Akbar Velayati said, referring to the nuclear deal and the process to reinstate the sanctions.

What if the U.S. triggers the mechanism. "The Islamic Republic has a very clear stance ... it is not possible for the Islamic Republic to unilaterally implement the JCPOA while the opposite parties fail to do so," Velayati said.

The official said Iran has no commercially viable transaction or trade with the Europeans who have virtually been a party to the U.S. sanctions regime. "An agreement which has practically been violated by one side has no validity."

Under the sanctions snapback process if a Security Council resolution to extend sanctions relief on Iran is not adopted within the 30 days, then UN sanctions are supposed to be reimposed. No such resolution has been put forward for a vote.

Indonesia, the president of the Security Council for August, said last month that it was "not in the position to take further action" on the U.S. bid to trigger a return of all UN sanctions on Iran because there was no consensus in the body.

Embassy...

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In Bahrain and the UAE, reports say an intense crackdown is underway against an opposition voices.

Nevertheless, Bahrainis rallied for an eight straight night Friday against the ruling regime's normalization with the occupying regime.

A dissident Emirati activist said Thursday the United Arab Emirates is cracking down on any opposition to normalization with the Zionist regime.

Explaining why a limited number of Emirati activists had denounced Abu Dhabi's rapprochement with Israel, Hamad al-Shamesi said "the answer is very obvious, anyone who criticizes the government has to pay a heavy price".

"He may be condemned to pay up to one million dirhams (\$272,260) and 10 years in jail," he said in an interview with the Arabi 21 online newspaper.

"Unfortunately the government has stepped up its repressive measures against citizens and immigrants with a focus on security policies and controlling beliefs."

As of Friday, more than two million signatures had been gathered for the "Character for Palestine," a petition launched by Emirati activists in rejection of any Arab normalization with Israel.

Rouhani...

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"We always avoid war, but if the enemies want to threaten and encroach upon our national interests in any part of the country, we will firmly stand up to any such move," he said. "I'm telling the enemies not to repeat a mistake."

The top commander also urged Iran's neighbors to reinforce their unity to stand up to enemies.

The admiral touched upon Iran's policy with regards to blocking the Strait of Hormuz, saying it is up to Iran's strategic decision-makers to make a decision on the issue.

What is related to the IRGC, he said, is that it should execute any order it receives and the force is ready to fulfill any such order.

Admiral Tangsiri warned the enemies that the Islamic Republic will cut off any hand which is extended out of aggression.

"We will cut off their hand if it is extended in aggression, and if they grit their teeth, we will smash them in their mouths," he said. "This is not a slogan, and we have proved it in practice."

Tangsiri also touched on normalization deals which Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates signed this month with the occupying regime of Israel.

He said the presence of the Zionist regime is definitely to the detriment of the regional states. "We consider this presence a threat and believe that our neighbors should not allow it."

Salehi...

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jumped over the past week from 68 a day to 200. "People are queuing to be admitted," he was cited as saying by ISNA.

If the trend continues, deaths from coronavirus could reach 600 a day within weeks, he said.

Iran's total number of confirmed cases in the last 24 hours spiked by 2,845 to 419,043, health ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said on television.

President Rouhani said that a 20% decline in public adherence to health protocols had contributed to the spike in infections.

"Today, the health ministry gave a worrying report. The public's observance, which was 82% in earlier weeks, has fallen to 62%," Rouhani said.

He said the ministry report showed a recurrence of infection among former patients.

Tabarsi called on authorities to limit school attendance to online classes, saying that in the last few days several students and teachers had been infected.

Schools re-opened on Sept. 5 for 15 million students after a seven-month closure despite concerns over increased spread of the coronavirus in the country.

Last month, over one million students sat for a four-day nationwide university entrance exam despite calls to postpone them. Rouhani said no student had tested positive for the virus following the exams.

UN Warns of 'War Crimes' in Turkish-Occupied Areas in Syria

NEW YORK (Al Jazeera) – The United Nations says Turkey must investigate possible war crimes and other rights violations it says were carried out by armed groups in the area of northern Syria it occupies.

Michelle Bachelet, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said violence and criminality was rife in those areas of Syria.

In a statement, Bachelet's UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) said it had noted an "alarming pattern in recent months of grave violations", having documented increased killings, kidnappings, unlawful transfers of people, and seizures of land and properties and forcible evictions without any apparent military necessity.

The victims include people perceived to be allied with opposing parties or as being critical of the actions of the Turkish-affiliated armed groups, Bachelet's office said.

Increased infighting among the various Turkish-affiliated armed



In this file picture, Turkish troops patrol the town of Atareb in Syria's northwestern province of Idlib.

groups over power-sharing was causing civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure, OHCHR said.

Bachelet urged Turkey to "immediately launch an impartial, transparent and independent investigation into the incidents we have verified, account for the fate of those detained and abducted by

the affiliated armed groups and hold accountable those responsible for what may, in some instances, amount to crimes under international law, including war crimes".

Bachelet's office said from the start of the year until last Monday it had verified the deaths of at least 116 civilians as a result of improvised explosive devices and ex-

plosive remnants of war, while a further 463 civilians were injured.

She said an investigation was "all the more vital given that we have received disturbing reports that some detainees and abductees have allegedly been transferred to Turkey following their detention in Syria by affiliated armed groups".

Later on Friday, the Turkish foreign ministry took umbrage at Bachelet's statement.

Ankara has been providing support to militants operating to topple the Damascus government since early 2011.

Last year, Turkey seized control of the border town of Ras al-Ain after it launched a cross-border invasion of northeastern Syria with the help of its allied armed groups to push Kurdish militants affiliated with the so-called People's Protection Units (YPG) away from border areas.

Ankara views the U.S.-backed YPG as a terrorist organization tied to the homegrown Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

Lebanon Army Finds Huge Fireworks Cache at Devastated Port

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – Lebanon's army says it has found 1.3 tons of fireworks during a search of Beirut port, which was devastated last month in a huge blast that was blamed on a large quantity of chemicals kept in poor condition.

The army said in a statement that the fireworks were found in 120 boxes in a warehouse during a search of the port. It said army engineers disposed of them.

The port and a swathe of central Beirut were ruined by the huge blast on August 4 that killed at least 190 people and injured 6,000 others. It was blamed on 2,750 tonnes of highly explosive ammonium nitrate kept at the port for years in poor condition.

Warehouses and concrete grain silos at the port were destroyed.

Lebanon's army said on September 3 it had also found a further 4.35 tons of ammonium nitrate near the entrance to Beirut port, which the army said at the time it was dealing with.

On Saturday, the Lebanese army announced that nine people remain missing in the huge explosions, adding search is still going on for the seven Lebanese and two Syrian people.

Around 45,744 residential units were destroyed by the explosions and the damage was assessed by 250 teams of 1,000 army members and 500 civil engineers, it added.

The army added it has carried

out a survey of more than 85,000 dwellings, businesses and other building units damaged by the massive port blast last month.

The survey "is considered to be sufficient, and there is therefore no need for further surveys by donor countries", it said in a statement.

On August 9, international donors pledged over 250 million euros (around \$300 million) in emergency aid, in a video conference.

Lebanon has been suffering from its worst economic crisis, prompting some Lebanese to leave the country for better living conditions. The port blast further deteriorated the economic situation.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Representative in

Lebanon Yukie Mokuo warned of the danger of illegal immigration attempts by Lebanese children and women to other countries, El-nashra news website reported.

"We affirm our continued commitment to support Lebanon to ensure the well-being of children at all times and address the root causes of immigration including poverty and lack of economic opportunities," Mokuo said.

The Lebanese army intercepted over a week ago a boat off the northern coast of Lebanon with a number of people including children onboard attempting to leave the country illegally to Cyprus, then to other European countries.

Alternate Working Hours in Istanbul

Resurgent Coronavirus Cases Fueling Tensions in Turkey

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) – Turkey's biggest city Istanbul adopted alternate working hours for public employees to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic over the rising number of daily cases, Istanbul Governor Ali Yerlikaya announced.

Speaking at a press conference, Yerlikaya said the new program aimed to reduce the crowd on public transport during rush hours to restrain the contamination risk.

He noted that under the new program, police, gendarmerie, and coast guard officers will have their shifts started at 7 am while municipality workers at 8 am and health workers at 8:30 am. All other public employees will work between 9:00 am to 4:30 pm.

In Istanbul, with a population of over 16 million, there are 5.5 million public employees, he said, adding that currently, 4.1 million people are using public transport each day. This number was previously 7.5 million before the pandemic, according to Yerlikaya.

Resurgent coronavirus cases in Turkey are fueling tensions between doctors who say the official figures underplay the scale of the outbreak and politicians who accuse the country's medical association of undermining efforts to contain it.

More than 1,600 new cases and 60 deaths from COVID-19 are now re-

ported daily, well off peak levels in April but rising steadily, with average numbers of deaths now three times the rates recorded between June and August.

Doctors across Turkey wore black ribbons this week to commemorate colleagues who have died, part of protests which also included a social media campaign with a message for the government: "You can't manage it; we are exhausted".

Many doctors question the official COVID-19 numbers, saying that although they don't have their own independent nationwide data, the scale of cases they see at a local level does not tally with the bigger picture presented by the government.

"The numbers of just one city, or the numbers unveiled by just one or two medical chambers are almost equal to the (official) numbers for the whole country," doctor Halis Yerlikaya told Reuters at a hospital in the southeastern province of Diyarbakir.

"This process is not handled transparently," said Yerlikaya, who is a member of the medics association's central committee.

Health Minister Fahrettin Koca announced from his Twitter account that the total number of people infected with the disease has almost reached 300,000 in the country on Friday.

on violence against women.

"We have many challenges ahead and there is no space for a retreat in holding the corrupt and those who obstruct efforts aimed at rebuilding a country capable of serving the citizens," Saleh said.

Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi, for his part, called on the country's presidency and parliament to "finish the election law".

Early elections are scheduled to be held

in Iraq in June.

"The Supreme Council for Women will soon be activated and it will be headed by myself with the aim of bringing justice to the Iraqi women," al-Kadhimi said.

Over the past weeks, the Iraqi government has been leading a major campaign to impose the rule of law, curb outlaws, and arrest officials involved in financial and administrative corruption.

Iraq Seeks to Enforce Rule of Law: President

BAGHDAD (MEMO) – Iraqi President Barham Salih said Saturday that he seeks to enforce the rule of law at the highest level of government.

"The reform process requires the provision of a favorable political climate by holding early elections away from the monopoly of weapons and manipulation so that the people can decide their own future," he told a conference organized by the Iraqi National Wisdom Movement