

ANKARA (Sputnik) – Turkey's Defense Ministry has confirmed that a Northrop F-5 has crashed in Konya province, south-central Turkey, and that the plane's pilot was killed. According to local media, the crashed jet belonged to the Air Force's Turkish Stars aerobatic team deployed at Konya's 3rd Main Jet Base, and that the accident happened during a training flight. Photos from the scene show smoke rising in an empty field. Television footage shows security and medical teams taping off an area, with multiple ambulances and military vehicles, at least one fire truck and a helicopter on the scene.

A conceited and self-admiring person is disliked by others; charity and alms are the best remedy for ailments and calamities; one has to account in the next world for the deeds that he has done in this world.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

Democrats to Biden: 'Publicly Pressure' Saudis to End Yemen Blockade

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – More than 70 U.S. lawmakers sent a letter to President Joe Biden on Tuesday urging him to “publicly pressure” Saudi Arabia into ending its “unconscionable” blockade on Yemen.

The letter, led by Congressmen Ro Khanna, Mark Pocan, and Congresswoman Debbie Dingell, said while ongoing negotiations should be supported, ending the blockade should be treated as a separate issue.

“We ask you to take additional steps to publicly pressure Saudi Arabia to lift this blockade immediately, unilaterally, and comprehensively,” the letter read.

“We strongly support a comprehensive political settlement that addresses all aspects of the conflict, including a nationwide ceasefire, currency stabilization, and payment of government salaries.

“At the same time, a U.S. demand to end the blockade must occur independently of negotiations.”

Saudi Arabia and its regional allies, chiefly the United Arab Emirates, started a bombing campaign against the impoverished nation in March 2015. The coalition also introduced an air and naval blockade



The file photo shows a 4-year-old Yemeni child suffering from malnutrition with his mother.

that has exacerbated the living conditions in the country.

The UN and several human rights groups have said the blockade has heavily restricted the flow of aid and goods coming into the country, putting millions at risk of famine.

“The blockade has been a leading driver of Yemen’s humanitarian catastrophe since 2015 and has contributed to shortages of fuel, affordable food, clean water, electricity and transportation,” Khanna, Pocan, and Dingell said in a statement.

A similar letter to Biden was sent

on Tuesday by a coalition of more than 70 humanitarian and rights groups and was signed by dozens of activists.

“This moral imperative requires the United States to pressure Saudi Arabia to lift this blockade immediately, unilaterally, and comprehensively,” the groups’ letter read.

Meanwhile, the Yemeni army said late on Tuesday it launched a fresh drone strike on a major airbase in Saudi Arabia in retaliation for the Riyadh regime’s ongoing military aggression and blockade against the war-torn impoverished country.

Spokesman for the Yemeni Armed Forces Brigadier General Yahya Saree announced that army troops and allied fighters from Popular Committees had hit sensitive targets in King Khalid airbase in the Saudi city of Khamis Mushait, some 884 kilometers south of the Saudi capital Riyadh.

Yemen’s Arabic-language al-Masirah television network cited Saree as saying that the retaliatory attack was carried out by two of the country’s domestically-developed Qasef-2K (Striker-2K) combat drones.

Saree stressed that the strike was “accurate,” and said the attack came in response to the continuing aggression and brutal siege on his country.

Yemen’s Air Force carried out a number of operations against sensitive and important sites in Saudi Arabia last month, targeting Abha International Airport as well as the King Khalid Air Base in Khamis Mushait.

Yemenis have stepped up their attacks on Saudi Arabia in recent months, saying the retaliatory strikes will continue as long as Riyadh carries on with its airstrikes and blockade.

Bahrain Political Prisoner Dies From ‘Medical Negligence’: Opposition



Protesters participate in a rally in the town of A’ali, Bahrain, on April 6, 2021, in a show of solidarity with political prisoners and following the death of anti-regime activist Abbas Malallah at the notorious Jau Prison.

MANAMA (Dispatches) – A Bahraini political prisoner has died at a detention center, which the regime authorities have claimed was due to “natural causes.”

However, the main opposition group Al-Wefaq, which was dissolved in 2016, has claimed that he died “as a result of dangerous, inhumane conditions [and] medical negligence.”

A statement was issued by Al-Wefaq on Tuesday, following reports that Abbas Malallah passed away at the notorious Jau Prison.

His funeral procession brought out protestors around the country as he was laid to rest in his home village of Nuwaidrat, approximately 10 kilometers south of the capital Manama. He is survived by his wife and three children.

Malallah was arrested on May 17 in 2011 after being accused of taking part in anti-regime demonstrations during the Bahraini Uprising earlier that year.

He was sentenced to 15 years and 6 months in prison. However, his

health is said to have deteriorated since 2019 and his body is said to have been lodged with pellets as a result of shots fired by the regime’s forces.

His family had reportedly raised his plight with the authorities to provide him with adequate healthcare.

Separately, detained opposition figure and former member of parliament, Sheikh Hassan Issa, has been admitted to the hospital after he reported chronic fatigue and muscle weakness because of COVID-19 infection.

On Monday, Bahrain’s most prominent cleric Ayatollah Sheikh Isa Qassim expressed concern over the poor healthcare situation in the country’s prisons and jails, renewing his call for the immediate release of political inmates in light of the deadly coronavirus pandemic.

Demonstrations in Bahrain have been held on a regular basis ever since a popular uprising began in mid-February 2011.

Hezbollah, Russia Discuss Opening Representative Office in Moscow: Report

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – Russia and Lebanon’s Hezbollah are reportedly considering the possibility of opening a representative office for the resistance movement in the capital, Moscow, following high-level meetings between the two sides last month.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov received on March 15 a delegation of senior Hezbollah figures led by Mohammad Raad, the head of the Loyalty to the Resistance Bloc — the political wing of Hezbollah — and media reports

indicated that the two sides had held “open and friendly” talks.

“The two sides stressed the need to strengthen means of communication between them and to adopt direct channels of communication between the party and Moscow, while studying the possibility of establishing a representative office for the party in the Russian capital,” Lebanon’s al-Akhbar newspaper said in a report on Tuesday.

The meeting, held at Russia’s request, was described by

analysts as different from Moscow’s previous ones with Hezbollah and it showed Russia’s inclination to see the Lebanese resistance movement as an “independent” power.

Hezbollah was established following the 1982 invasion and occupation of southern Lebanon by the Zionist regime. Since then, the popular resistance movement has grown into a powerful military force.

During the 2000 and 2006 Zionist wars on Lebanon, battle-ground contribution by Hez-

bollah proved an indispensable asset, forcing the occupying regime’s military into a retreat and shattering the myth of the occupying entity’s invincibility.

Moreover, Hezbollah has played a critical role in the Syrian military’s counter-terrorism operations over the past years with the aim of preventing the spillover of the Syria crisis into Lebanon.

Unlike the Western countries, Russia does not consider Hezbollah a ‘terrorist’ organization.

Amnesty: Coronavirus Hitting MENA Hard

CAIRO (Al Jazeera) – The coronavirus pandemic has amplified risks for the most vulnerable in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA), according to a new report by Amnesty International.

Already existing inequalities and discrimination have left some people – including prisoners, refugees, migrants and minorities – disproportionately affected by the pandemic, said the report by the human rights watchdog published on Wednesday.

In an example of institutionalized discrimination, Zionist regime authorities did not provide COVID-19 vaccinations to five million Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and besieged Gaza Strip when the regime’s vaccination drive began in December 2020.

“This move flagrantly violated Israel’s obligations as an occupying power under international

law,” the report said.

The pandemic also worsened the situation for migrant workers tied to the “abusive” kafala sponsorship system in Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the rights watchdog said.

While some Persian Gulf countries waived penalties for overstaying visas, many migrant workers also faced arbitrary dismissal from their jobs and were not paid for months.

Migrant workers were also at an increased risk of COVID-19 because of unsanitary conditions and overcrowding in camps or shelters.

In Jordan, thousands of migrant workers who lost their jobs rarely had access to social protection or alternative employment.

In several countries, prisoners were at an increased risk of contracting COVID-19 due to

overcrowding, insanitary conditions and poor ventilation, the report found.

Overcrowding is common due to arbitrary detention practices, including prolonged pre-trial detention without effective appeal, as in Egypt, or the so-called administrative detention by the Zionist regime, the rights watchdog said.

Heba Morayef, regional director for MENA at Amnesty International called 2020 “a catastrophic year” for those already marginalized, as the pandemic made their situation “more precarious than ever”.

“The pandemic has amplified divisions, discrimination and inequalities that already exist in the region. Governments must prioritize the provision of adequate medical care in prisons and to alleviate overcrowding; all those who have been arbitrarily detained must be released,” Morayef said.

Zionist Regime Blocks Palestinian Election Meeting

AL-QUDS (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime’s police have given their first public signal of opposition to the participation of Palestinians from East al-Quds in the May 22 elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council.

Regime authorities issued an order against the Ambassador Hotel, which was hosting an election-related event, demanding the hotel ensured that the event did not happen.

Samer, a receptionist at the hotel, told Arab News that the police came with a written order to close the hall which was expected to hold the meeting. All of those invited were asked not to hold the meeting per the orders of the regime’s police.

Ghada Abu Rabae, a candidate for the Palestinian elections on the official Fatah list, told Arab News that she was given a written order to come to the police station where she was warned not to participate in the elections and then let go.

She later tweeted that the attempts to intimidate Palestinians from al-Quds will not work. “I and all my family and friends will not be discouraged and we will continue to insist on our right to participate in the Palestinian democratic process in al-Quds. Neither their security

threats nor intimidation will stop us from insisting that al-Quds is our capital.”

Nader Salaymeh, another Fatah candidate who attended the meeting, told Arab news that the police intervention was a violation of signed agreements.

Legislative elections are scheduled for May 22, with a presidential vote set for July 31.

The Palestinians have not held a vote since 2006, when the Hamas group won a landslide victory in parliamentary elections.

Abbas, who was elected president of the Palestinian Authority following the death of Yasser Arafat in 2004, has not yet declared whether he intends to run again.

His official mandate ran out in 2009 but he has been ruling by decree since then. He has never chosen a successor and several senior members of Fatah are believed to be eyeing the position.

The secular Fatah party, which controls the West Bank, is facing internal challenges from dissident factions, including the Freedom List, led by Nasser al-Qudwa, a nephew of the late Arafat.

Freedom has been endorsed by Marwan Barghouti, a popular leader who is serving multiple life sentences in the occupied territories.