

BEIRUT (MEMO) – Lebanese authorities have announced the thwarting of half a billion in counterfeit U.S. dollars through Beirut's Rafic Hariri International Airport, Arabi21 reported.

In a statement, the internal security services confirmed that its customs staff at the airport had foiled the smuggling of \$480 million in counterfeit U.S. dollars. The money was hidden in the luggage of three Lebanese citizens who were heading for Turkey.

According to the statement, the counterfeit money was seized by the Office of Anti-Financial and Money Laundering Crimes.

People in this world are like travelers whose journey is going on though they are asleep. (Life's journey is going on though men may not feel it).

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

682 Politicians, Academics Urge Biden to End Zionist Oppression

Ansarullah: U.S. Pursuing Plots in Yemen Under Humanitarian Cover



Smoke rose following airstrikes by the Zionist regime on a building in Gaza City on Thursday.

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – More than 680 global leaders, from politicians and Nobel laureates to leading academics and peace advocates, have called on U.S. President Joe Biden to honor his commitments towards protecting the human rights of Palestinians.

In an open letter published earlier this week, the group called on Biden to put "human rights at the centre of U.S. foreign policy" and to "help bring an end to the

Zionist regime's institutionalized domination and oppression of the Palestinian people".

"A sustainable and just peace - for all people - will remain elusive if U.S. policy holds to a political status quo devoid of justice and accountability," the letter read.

"Moving forward, the United States must address the root causes of the violence, which successive administrations have neglected.

"Your administration must apply concerted diplomatic pressure to help end the ever-expanding discrimination and systemic oppression and ensure accountability for Israeli authorities that violate Palestinian rights."

The signatories included Israel's former attorney general Michael Ben-Yair; former Knesset speaker Avraham Burg; former Irish President Mary Robinson; 2011 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Tawakkol

Karman; Israeli academic Ilan Pappé; American professor Noam Chomsky; and a number of British lawmakers among others.

At least 260 Palestinians, including 66 children, were killed in the Zionist regime's bombardment of the Gaza Strip in 11 days of the war that began on May 10. The regime's airstrikes also brought widespread devastation to the already impoverished territory.

The Gaza-based resistance movements responded by launching over 4,000 rockets into the occupied territories, some reaching as far as Tel Aviv and even Haifa and Nazareth to the north.

The Zionist regime was eventually forced to announce a ceasefire, brokered by Egypt, which came into force in the early hours of May 21.

During the offensive by the Zionist regime on the besieged Gaza Strip, Biden came under criticism for not calling for a ceasefire immediately.

The U.S. president on May 15 held a telephone conversation with then Zionist prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and reaffirmed his strong support for what he described as the regime's right to defend itself against retaliatory rocket attacks from Gaza-based Palestinian resistance factions.



A malnourished boy sits on a bed at a malnutrition treatment center in Sana'a, Yemen.

SANA'A (Press TV) – The spokesman for Yemen's popular Ansarullah resistance movement says the United States is pursuing its own interests and plots in the Arab country under the guise of humanitarian issues, and is by no means serious about ending the Saudi-led military aggression and siege against the Yemeni nation.

Mohammed Abdul-Salam told Arabic-language al-Masirah television network in an exclusive interview on Friday that the removal of the brutal siege against Yemen must not be politicized.

"The United States is not serious about stopping the aggression against Yemen and lifting the siege. It rather seeks to advance its own plots in Yemen, and the sufferings of the Yemeni nation are not a cause of concern for it," he said.

"We emphasize that import of foodstuff and medicine into Yemen is the natural right of the country. We do not want to receive aids from anyone. What we just want is the removal of the siege," the senior Yemeni official added.

Abdul-Salam censured the United Nations' decision to add the Ansarullah movement to its blacklist of groups for violating children's rights.

"The UN is acting in favor of major powers, and exhibits clear bias. The aggressor countries are committing the most heinous crimes against Yemeni children, and yet they were not included in the list," the Ansarullah spokesman commented.

Abdul-Salam went on to say that when Ansarullah reacted angrily to the removal of the Saudi-led military co-

alition in Yemen from a list of groups violating children's rights, former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said Saudi Arabia was exerting "unacceptable" undue pressure and had threatened to cut some UN funding.

"The UN decisions fall within the framework of improper political criteria and accusations," he said.

Separately, Abdul-Salam tweeted that Yemen is resisting the Saudi-led aggression and blockade, emphasizing that aggressors must take the first step in order for the hostilities to end.

In another development, spokesman for the Yemeni Armed Forces Brigadier General Yahya Saree announced in a post published on his Twitter page that a major airbase in Saudi Arabia's southern region of Asir had come under a drone strike in retaliation for the devastating military campaign and blockade.

He said Yemeni armed forces and fighters from allied Popular Committees used a domestically-manufactured Qasef-2K (Striker-2K) combat drone to hit designated targets inside King Khalid airbase near the Saudi city of Khamis Mushait early on Saturday.

The attack, he said, was in response to Riyadh's ongoing military aggression and brutal siege against Yemen.

Saudi Arabia, backed by the U.S. and regional allies, launched a devastating war on Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the government of former Yemeni president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi back to power and crushing Ansarullah.

The Saudi-led military aggression has left hundreds of thousands of Yemenis dead, and displaced millions more.

Report: U.S. Reducing Military Presence in Middle East

RIYADH (Dispatches) – The Biden administration is withdrawing Patriot missile batteries from four Middle East countries as the U.S. reduces its military footprint in the region, a U.S. news outlet reported on Friday.

The Pentagon is pulling about eight Patriot batteries from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Jordan, as well as a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system from Saudi Arabia that had been deployed by the previous Trump administration, the Wall Street Journal reported citing unnamed U.S. officials.

The redeployment includes hun-

dreds of U.S. troops who operate the systems and began earlier this month following a June 2 phone call in which U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin informed Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of the shift, according to the Journal.

Some analysts believe Washington is reducing military presence in the region to increase the focus of its military forces on China and Russia.

The U.S. intensified its military presence in the Middle East about two years ago amid tensions with Iran. Part of the military hardware was deployed in September 2019

to Saudi Arabia after a series of attacks on Saudi oil facilities.

The Journal report noted that the Pentagon decision shows that Washington now believes that the risk of escalating hostilities between the U.S. and Iran has decreased.

"What you're seeing is a realignment of resources with strategic priorities," said a senior U.S. military official.

"We still maintain tens of thousands of forces in the region, we still have forces in Iraq and Syria, those forces aren't leaving. We still have our bases in the countries of our Persian Gulf partners, they aren't shutting down,

there is still substantial presence, substantial posture in the region," the official added.

However, a White House official said that some personnel and equipment from Afghanistan are being redeployed to the Middle East to address some of the threats in the region.

The U.S. invaded and occupied Afghanistan in 2001, claiming that the Taliban were harboring al-Qaeda. The invasion removed the Taliban regime from power but prompted widespread militancy and insecurity across the country. The war has taken countless lives, mostly of Afghan civilians.

Palestine Scraps Deal for Near-Expired COVID Vaccines From Zionist Regime

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – The Palestinian Authority (PA) cancelled a deal on Friday to receive soon-to-expire COVID-19 vaccines from the Zionist regime after an initial shipment showed an expiration date sooner than had been agreed, the PA health minister said.

The occupying regime and the PA announced a vaccine swap deal earlier on Friday that would have seen the regime send up to 1.4 million Pfizer-BioNTech doses to the PA, in exchange for receiving a reciprocal number of doses from the PA later this year.

The doses were due to "expire soon", Zionist Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's office said in a statement announcing the deal. The PA said they had been "approved in order to speed up the vaccination process" in the occupied West Bank and Gaza.

"They told us the expiration date was in July or August, which would allow lots of time for use," PA Health Minister Mai Alkaila told reporters later on Friday.

"But (the expiration) turned out to be in June. That's not enough time to use them, so we rejected them," she said.

"After the technical teams in the ministry of health examined the first batch of the Pfizer vaccines that were received this evening from Israel, it became clear that the 90,000 doses received do not conform to the specifications contained in the agreement," said PA spokesman Ibrahim Melhem at a joint press conference with Alkaila in Ramallah in the occupied West Bank.

"Accordingly, Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh instructed the minister of health to

cancel the agreement with the Israeli side on exchanging the vaccine and returning the quantity that was received today to Israel," Melhem added.

Since the announcement, Palestinian officials came under heavy criticism on social media over the agreement on receiving soon-to-expire vaccines from the Zionist regime, with critics suggesting that the doses might not be effective.

Rights groups say Israel, as an occupying regime, is obliged to provide Palestinians with COVID-19 vaccines.

The Zionist regime has vaccinated nearly 85 percent of its population. Nevertheless, according to the Palestinian health ministry, just over 270,000 Palestinians have received two doses in the occupied West Bank and besieged Gaza Strip, home to a combined 5.2 million people.

U.S., UN, EU Urged to Prevent Executions in Egypt

WASHINGTON (Middle East Eye) – A group of expatriate Egyptian politicians and political activists are urging the US, UN and multinational bodies in Europe and Africa to pressure the Egyptian government to stop the execution of a dozen members of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The Egyptian National Action Group (ENAG), a group of exiled politicians, sent a letter to U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and Josep Borrell, the high representative of the European Union for foreign affairs and security policy, calling on them to intervene in the case.

"It is your moral duty to use of your influence as the European Union's High Representative to prevent [President Abdel Fattah] el-Sisi's regime from using the death penalty and life imprisonment against political dissidents," read the letter, sent by former Egyptian presidential candidate Ayman Nour and Egypt's ex-invest-

ment minister Yehia Hamed.

Meanwhile, members of the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) sent a letter to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, urging the continental body to also intervene.

The letter requested "urgent action by the African Commission to avoid irreparable harm to the individuals' rights under the African Charter, particularly the right to life and integrity of person".

"It is submitted that the 12 individuals are at risk of imminent execution, and therefore irreparable violation to their fundamental right to life and to human dignity, and that urgent action by the African Commission is required to avoid irreparable harm to the individuals' rights."

The FJP argues that, with Egypt being a member of the African Union and its human rights commission, the body has jurisdiction to involve itself in the case and stop the executions.