

Syrian Army Tightens Noose on Militants in South

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – Syrian Army troops have stepped up attacks on militants in the southern city of Dara’a in a bid to regain control over an area that has become a haven for terrorists since it was taken three years ago, witnesses, the army and residents said.

An army assault on the old quarter of Dara’a dealt a blow to terrorists after starting the anti-terrorist operation in the region on Thursday.

The army has since sent hundreds of elite troops, dozens of tanks and armored vehicles to storm the terrorist bastion.

The militants disrupted traffic along the Damascus- Dara’a highway leading to the border with Jordan, which closed the crossing point on Sunday.

The Syrian army, aided by Russia, retook control of the province that borders Jordan and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights in 2018.

Russian-brokered deals at the time forced militants to hand over heavy weapons.

The Syrian army on Sunday blamed terrorists for foiling several rounds of negotiations to hammer



In this July 5, 2018 photo, smoke rises above an area of the Syrian city of Dara’a.

out a deal for the region since last week to allow the army to set up checkpoints in the enclave.

Syrian official news agency (SANA) said on Thursday a hospital and several residential neighborhoods were targeted in an attack by militants on government-held areas in Dara’a city.

Government sources said two civilians, including a woman and her child, were killed when the foreign-backed militants targeted

the provincial capital with mortar shells. Three others were also injured.

The Damascus government says the offensive was in response to militants’ refusal to surrender under a deal reached in 2018.

Syria’s al-Watan newspaper has called the developments the “start of a military operation against the hideouts of terrorists who thwarted a reconciliation deal”.

The recapture of Dara’a is highly

important because it borders the occupied Golan Heights which Israel has used to treat wounded militants fighting the Syrian government since 2011.

The territory’s return to Syrian government control could cut the much-reported collaboration between the Zionist regime and the militants and accordingly deal a blow to Tel Aviv’s plans to annex the Golan Heights.

Syria has been gripped by foreign-backed militancy since March 2011. The government says Western countries and their regional allies are aiding terror outfits.

The U.S. has deployed soldiers and military equipment in Syria without any authorization from Damascus or the UN.

Washington has long been collaborating with anti-Damascus militants and plundering Syria’s resources, ignoring repeated calls by Damascus to end its illegal occupation of the country.

In recent years, Syrian troops have made significant advances against remaining pockets of land held by militants across the Arab country.

Antalya, Mugla Wildfires Continue as Turkey Puts Out Dozens



A firefighter extinguishes a forest fire near the town of Manavgat.

ANKARA (Al Jazeera) – More than 100 wildfires have been brought under control in Turkey, according to officials, as firefighters worked to battle blazes that

continued in popular seaside destinations.

Minister of Forestry and Agriculture Bekir Pakdemirli said on Twitter on Sunday that five

fires were continuing in the tourist destinations of Antalya and Mugla, while 107 fires were “under control”.

Pakdemirli’s list showed fires began in 32 provinces from Wednesday onward. Six people have died, with hundreds injured and thousands evacuated from their homes.

The fires in Antalya were in two districts while in Mugla, the tourist destination of Marmaris and others were hit by fire.

Police used water cannon assisted helicopters and fire trucks in a village in Bodrum, a popular district in Mugla that saw panic-struck tourists being evacuated from hotels on Saturday as fire rolled down the hill towards the sea.

Turkish television showed fires had reignited in the area after being extinguished earlier, with blazes and smoke approaching a village. Civilians were trying to help.

Fires were also encroaching on a village near the town of Manavgat, where helicopters were trying to extinguish blazes.

While Turkish authorities are investigating whether the fires may have started as an act of sabotage, experts mostly point to the climate crisis, as seen by the drastic increases in temperatures along with accidents caused by people.

A heatwave across southern Europe has led to wildfires across the Mediterranean, including in Italy and Greece.

Egypt: 89 Militants Killed in North Sinai Operations

CAIRO (Dispatches) – Egypt’s military killed 89 militants in operations in North Sinai, a region where an affiliate of the Daesh terrorist group has been active for nearly a decade, according to a statement released on Sunday.

“Amid ongoing efforts in pursuing and defeating terrorist elements... during the previous period, the armed forces... carried out operations that killed 89 dangerous takfiris... in northern Sinai,” the army spokesperson said on his social media account.

His statement did not specify a timeframe for the operations, but said the army had suffered eight casualties.

The army also said it destroyed 404 improvised explosive devices (IEDs), four explosive belts and 13 tunnels used by militants to infiltrate Egyptian territory.

Gruesome pictures of some of the slain suspected militants were published with the statement, along with a trove of confiscated weapons.

The Ministry of Defense released a longer statement on its website

confirming the operations, in which it said the army also destroyed 404 improvised explosive devices (IEDs), four explosive belts and 13 tunnels used by militants to infiltrate Egyptian territory.

Egyptian forces have for years fought a militancy in the Sinai Peninsula, led mainly by the local branch of Daesh.

A decade-old hardened militancy in North Sinai escalated in 2013 when the army overthrew Egypt’s president Mohamed Morsi.

Most attacks have been staged in the Sinai Peninsula but they have also used the territory as a launchpad to strike elsewhere in Egypt.

In February 2018, the government launched a nationwide operation against militants, mainly focused on North Sinai and the country’s Western Desert.

Around 1,060 suspected militants and dozens of security personnel have been killed in the Sinai, according to official figures.

No independently sourced death toll is available, as North Sinai is off-limits to journalists.

21 Coalitions to Run in Iraq Parliamentary Elections

BAGHDAD (Anadolu) – Twenty-one electoral coalitions will run in Iraq’s upcoming parliamentary elections in October, according to the country’s election commission, reports Anadolu Agency.

“There are a total of 3,249 candidates vying in the polls, including 951 women and 789 independents,” commission spokesperson Jumana al-Ghalay said in

a statement.

The Al-Fatah Alliance headed by Hadi al-Amiri and the State of Law Coalition led by former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki are the two main parties running in the vote. There is also the National Power of the State Coalition led by Ammar al-Hakim and Al-Nasr Coalition of former premier Haidar al-Abadi.

Prominent Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr has announced his boycott of the upcoming parliamentary elections in Iraq.

The polls were originally scheduled to be held in 2022, but Iraq’s political parties have decided to hold early elections following protests that erupted in the country in 2019 against poor services.

Biden... (Continued From Page One)

to future public health crises.

On a 5-4 vote in late June, the Supreme Court allowed the broad eviction ban to continue through the end of July. One of those in the majority, Justice Brett Kavanaugh, made clear he would block any additional extensions unless there was “clear and specific congressional authorization.”

Biden, heeding the court’s warning, called on Congress on Thursday to swiftly pass legislation to extend the date.

Racing to respond, Democrats strained to draft a bill and rally the votes. Pelosi implored colleagues to pass legislation extending the deadline, calling it a “moral imperative,” to protect renters and also the landlords who are owed compensation.

Waters quickly produced a draft of a bill that would require the CDC to continue the ban through Dec. 31. At a hastily arranged hearing Friday morning to consider the bill, she urged her colleagues to act.

But Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers of Washington, the top Republican on another panel handling the issue, said the Democrats’ bill was rushed.

“This is not the way to legislate,” she said.

Landlords are against any extension. They, too, are arguing for speeding up the distribution of rental assistance.

The National Apartment Association and several others this week filed a federal lawsuit asking for \$26 billion in damages because of the impact of the moratorium.

Despite behind-the-scenes wrangling throughout the day on Friday, Democratic lawmakers had questions and concerns and could not muster support to extend the ban.

Revising the emergency legislation to shorten the eviction deadline to Oct. 18, in line with federal COVID-19 guidelines, drew a few more lawmakers in support — but still not enough for passage.

House Democrats tried to approve an extension by consent, without a formal vote, but House Republicans objected.

Democratic lawmakers were livid at the prospect of evictions in the middle of a surging pandemic.

Bush, who experienced homelessness as a young mother of two in her 20s, said that, at the time, she was working in a low-wage job.

“I don’t want anyone else to have to go through what I went through, ever,” said Bush, now 45, wiping away tears. “I don’t care what the circumstances are, and so I’m going to fight now that I’m in a position to be able to do something about it.”

Waters said House leaders should have forced a vote and Biden should not have let the warnings from one Supreme Court justice prevent him from taking executive action to prevent evictions.

“The president should have moved on it,” Waters said. She vowed to try to pass the bill again when lawmakers return from a recess.

Some places are likely to see spikes in evictions starting Monday, while other jurisdictions will see an increase in court filings that will lead to evictions over several months.

The administration is trying to keep renters in place through other means. It released more than \$1.5 billion in rental assistance in June, which helped nearly 300,000 households. The departments of Housing and Urban Development, Agriculture and Veterans Affairs extended their foreclosure-related eviction moratoriums through the end of September on households living in federally insured, single-family homes late Friday, after Biden had asked them to do so.

Zionists... (Continued From Page 2)

Informed sources told Al-Alam television Saturday that the attack was in response to an Israeli missile attack on Syria that killed two resistance forces.

Early last month, a fire broke out on an Israeli-owned cargo ship after it was struck by an “unidentified weapon” in the northern Indian Ocean.

Back in February, an Israeli-owned ship was hit by an explosion in the sea of Oman. In April, another Israeli ship came under attack off the coast of the UAE.

The attacks come against a backdrop of the Zionist regime’s various assaults on cargo ships across the Persian Gulf region and elsewhere.

A Palestinian-American journalist said the recent retaliatory attack shows that the resistance front is in possession of resources and the technology capable of exposing the occupying regime of Israel’s vulnerability.

“Most of the information available regarding this incident comes from Israeli and American sources; the confirmation that drones have been used to attack the ship came specifically from the U.S. Navy’s Fifth Fleet,” Ramzy Baroud, an internationally syndicated columnist and the founder of PalestineChronicle.com, told Press TV.

“Since no independent and trustworthy sources have confirmed - or denied - the sequence of events that led to the attack on the Mercer Street, we cannot discuss the event with total trust and reliance on Israeli and U.S. sources,” he added.

The journalist said that the possible use of drones in the attack against the tanker vessel was indicative of “advanced surveillance and intelligence.”

Baroud underlined that regardless of the possibility of an Israeli response, it seems that the “rules of the game have indeed changed and not in favor of Israel.”

“This is a game changer. Since Israel began its normalization with Arab countries in that region, the understanding was that Israel has gained a geostrategic position vis-a-vis its attempt at isolating and targeting Iran,” Baroud said. “Indeed, the Israeli regime and media were buying into this fantasy that the rules of the game have changed in favor of Israel.”

Baroud went on to say that if the resistance front proves to be responsible for the attack on the Mercer Street, it means that it is willing to take serious measures to remind the occupying regime that it must not be comfortable with the supposed status quo and that the outcome of the geostrategic conflict is yet to be determined.

Baroud said the attack was a warning to Tel Aviv that it would be held accountable for its aggression against resisting forces in the region, and that “Israel’s enemies have the resources and the technology that can expose Israel’s vulnerability in the region.”