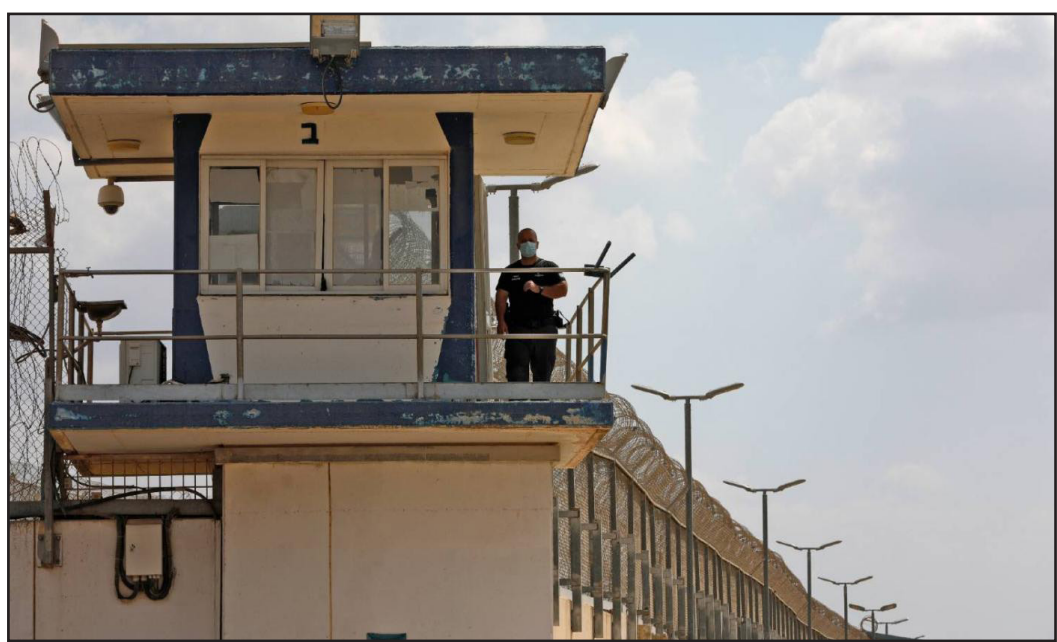


# Zionist Director Reveals Security Failures Inside Gilboa Prison



*A Zionist officer keeps watch from an observation tower at the Gilboa prison in northern parts of the occupied territories on 6 September 2021.*

AL-QUDS (Dispatches) – The director of the Zionist regime’s Gilboa prison has accused the chief of the occupying regime’s prison service of turning him into a scapegoat following the escape of six Palestinian prisoners in September.

On 6 September, six Palestinian political prisoners tunneled their way out of the maximum-security Gilboa prison in northern parts of the

occupied territories, after having dug a hole in their cell with only spoons.

Though they were all re-arrested after a few days, the jailbreak was celebrated by Palestinians and led to Zionist officials to trade blame for loopholes in the prison’s structure, which was left unsolved.

Gilboa director Freddy Ben-Shitrit, the highest

security official to testify as part of a governmental investigation into the prison break, accused Zionist prison service commissioner Katy Perry on Wednesday of singling him out for failing to prevent the prisoners’ escape.

Ben-Shitrit said that since news broke of the prison break, “the atmosphere was against” him among prison officials.

“I was targeted by the commissioner of the prison service as responsible for the incident and as someone who failed,” Ynet quoted Ben Shitrit as saying. “She appealed to the minister of internal security to oust me even before the incident was investigated.”

He added that Perry had tried to turn him into “a scapegoat” - “perhaps because of the popular pressure on her and the call for her to resign”.

Ben-Shitrit said that Gilboa had been running without a director for almost six months before he took charge, and that he faced budget constraints and had no authority to change padlocks on cells, as it fell under the power of prison service.

He added that prison guards at Gilboa would use rubber hammers to knock on walls and floors in order to detect possible holes, relying only on their sense of hearing.

“It’s quite similar to how to test a watermelon when buying it in the market,” he said.

Perry is also expected to give her testimony as part of the regime investigation in coming weeks.

## Iraq: Foreign Combat Troops to Leave in 15 Days

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – Foreign combat forces will leave Iraq within 15 days, the Iraqi military said on Wednesday, and Anadolu News Agency reports.

Major General Tahsin al-Khafaji, spokesman for the Joint Operations Command, told the state news agency that the departure of the foreign forces was underway as scheduled.

He, however, said that a limited foreign presence will remain at the Ain al-Assad military base.

“Most of the combat forces left Iraq, and only advisers and

those working in the field of intelligence, reconnaissance and training remained,” al-Khafaji added.

The Iraqi spokesman said there is “a schedule for handling over weapons and equipment to the combat forces.”

On Friday, the Iraqi Resistance Coordination Committee raised concerns that there was no sign of U.S. troop withdrawal from Iraq.

In July, Iraq and the U.S. agreed to withdraw all U.S. combat troops from Iraq by the end of this year.

Back then, U.S. President Joe Biden and Iraqi Prime Min-

ister Mustafa al-Kadhimi declared that the U.S. mission in Iraq will transition from combat to “advisory” role.

“The delegations decided, following recent technical talks, that the security relationship will fully transition to a training, advising, assisting, and intelligence-sharing role, and that there will be no U.S. forces with a combat role in Iraq by December 31, 2021,” Baghdad and Washington said in a joint statement on July 26.

The agreement, which has effectively given a mere new name to the U.S. military presence in Iraq, has enraged Iraqi

resistance groups, which have played a significant role in defeating the Daesh terrorist group in Iraq in 2017.

Daesh began a terror campaign in Iraq in 2014, overrunning vast swathes in lightning attacks.

Iraq declared victory over Daesh in December 2017 after a three-year counter-terrorism military campaign, which also had the support of neighboring Iran.

The terror outfit’s remnants, though, keep staging sporadic attacks across Iraq, attempting to regroup and unleash fresh violence.

## UAE Says to Boost Investment in Turkey After Fence-Mending Visit

ANKARA (Middle East Eye) – A series of investment agreements were signed by the United Arab Emirates and Turkey on Wednesday, during Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan’s visit to Ankara to meet President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, according to Turkish officials.

After 10 years of political and proxy conflicts in places such as Libya, Egypt and the Horn of Africa, and accusations that the Emiratis had plotted to take down the Turkish government, the two countries have begun to restore relations over the past year.

Mohammed bin Zayed’s visit to Turkey was his first in almost a decade.

As well as a memorandum of understanding to strengthen trade, energy and environmental ties, agreements were also signed on Wednesday covering direct Emirati investment in Turkey.

The UAE’s Industry Minister Sultan al-Jaber said that the main purpose of the visit was to increase trade and business partnerships through sustainable, successful investments.

A well-placed source told MEE recently that the crown prince told Erdogan in a phone call earlier this year that he was ready to invest as much as \$100bn. Others said the number was at least \$10bn - both hefty numbers that would boost Turkey’s flagging economy.

The U.S. dollar dropped 7 percent against the Turkish lira on Wednesday after news of the investment agreements broke, Bloomberg reported.

Turkey’s lira had nose-dived around 10 percent against the dollar on Tuesday after President Erdogan defended recent rate cuts, and vowed to win his “economic war of independence” despite widespread criticism and pleas to reverse course.

The lira, which at one point was more than 13 against the dollar, crashed after hitting record lows in the last 11 straight sessions.

Erdogan defended the policy at a news conference late on Monday and said tighter monetary policy would not lower inflation.

“I reject policies that will contract our country, weaken it, condemn our people to unemployment, hunger and poverty,” the president said.

## Putin Vows Russia’s Support for Lebanon’s Sovereignty, Unity

BEIRUT (Xinhua) – Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday affirmed his country’s permanent commitment to supporting Lebanon’s sovereignty and unity, a statement by Lebanon’s Presidency reported.

“No external interference should be allowed in Lebanon’s internal affairs,” Putin said in a letter delivered to Lebanese President Michel Aoun by Russian Ambassador to Lebanon Alexander Rudakov.

Putin congratulated Aoun and the Lebanese on the 78th anniversary of Lebanon’s independence.

The Russian president also expressed his confidence about the two countries’ capacity to further develop bilateral relations, which

would play a role in enhancing security and stability in the region.

For his part, Aoun asked Rudakov to thank Putin for his prompt response to Lebanon’s request for the satellite images Russia has for Beirut’s port before and after the explosions on Aug. 4, 2020.

“We will give the images to judicial authorities, hoping that they help in revealing new facts about this horrible crime,” Aoun said.

Russia handed over on Monday satellite images prepared by its space agency Roscosmos for the Beirut port after a request from Aoun.

Lebanon was rocked on Aug. 4, 2020 by two huge explosions in the capital Beirut,

killing about 212 people and wounding more than 6,000 others.

Investigations into the blasts have so far failed to hold anyone accountable for the entry of the ammonium nitrate into the port and reveal the real reasons behind the explosions.

The UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) on Wednesday denied any role of the UNIFIL in the entry of the ammonium nitrate that exploded at the Beirut port on Aug. 4, 2020, the National News Agency reported.

The remarks by UNIFIL Spokesman Andrea Tenenti came after recent media reports suspecting a role of the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force (MTF) in the tragic Beirut port explosions.

## Worrying... (Continued From Page One)

undo its past wrongs before the Islamic Republic rescinds its countermeasures.

Former U.S. president Donald Trump left the JCPOA in May 2018 and reimposed the anti-Iran sanctions that the deal had lifted. Following a year of strategic patience, Iran resorted to its legal rights under the JCPOA, which grants a party the right to suspend its contractual commitments in case of non-compliance by other signatories, and let go of some of the restrictions imposed on its nuclear energy program.

The U.S. administration of President Joe Biden has said it is willing to compensate for Trump’s mistake and rejoin the deal, but it has shown an overriding propensity for maintaining some of the sanctions as a tool of pressure.

Tehran insists that all sanctions must first be removed in a verifiable manner before it reverses its remedial measures.

Amir-Abdollahian met with Rafael Grossi, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), here Tuesday and urged the body to keep cooperating with the Islamic Republic within the framework of its technical duties and avoid taking political positions.

He said that he wanted to deepen cooperation with Iran in his talks in Tehran, but as in the past, he made disparaging remarks after leaving the Islamic Republic.

Grossi claimed in Vienna Wednesday that his inspectors were close to being unable to “guarantee” they knew the size of Iran’s stockpile of enriched uranium.

“Our negotiations have been inconclusive, meaning that we could not finish,” Grossi told reporters in Vienna, where the IAEA is based, after addressing the agency’s board of governors. “I’m not giving up on trying to find some understanding, but in terms of what we were discussing yesterday, we could not conclude an agreement.”

Pressed on whether any progress had been made, Grossi said that “in terms of the substance, no, quite clearly, we were not able to make progress.” However, he said that having got to know the new Iranian officials was “a positive element” and “this will certainly help.”

Then he claimed “We are close to the point where I would not be able to guarantee continuity of knowledge.”

On Tuesday, Grossi went to the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, the country’s civilian nuclear agency, and met its new head, Muhammad Eslami. He also met Amir-Abdollahian, who said Iran was determined to have “constructive engagement” with the IAEA to “improve mutual trust and cooperation”.

On Wednesday, a deputy foreign minister and nuclear negotiator for Iran, Ali Bagheri Kani, traveled to the United Arab Emirates and met with a prominent Emirati diplomat, Anwar Gargash. The UAE’s state-run WAM news agency described the meeting as dealing with “regional and international developments of common interest.”

## Court... (Continued From Page One)

has struggled to contain a resistance movement that includes peaceful dissenters. It has repeatedly accused Iran of backing the popular struggle against the monarchy, but its actions to stifle opposition groups have led to international criticism over its brutal crackdown on protests and other human rights violations.

One of the controversial allegations in the Future Bank case involved top Bahraini cleric Sheikh Isa Qassim. Bahraini officials criticized Future Bank for allowing him to make cash deposits in the bank. U.S. investigators, however, found that the cash consisted of tithes and alms collected from worshipers under a Shia tradition known as khums which is spent for charitable reasons to eliminate poverty and assist the most vulnerable classes.

## COVID-19... (Continued From Page One)

infections in 24 hours, the highest number since the start of the pandemic, and the government will announce new measures on Friday.

Hungary reported a record 12,637 new daily COVID-19 cases.

Prime Minister Viktor Orban’s government, which opposes further lockdowns for fear of stifling the economy, launched a vaccination campaign this week, offering shots without prior registration.

But the idea of mandatory vaccinations has also raised concerns among Hungarians.

Authorities in Russia, where daily coronavirus-related deaths are near record highs, said they were scouring social networks and media websites to find people spreading false claims about the dangers of vaccination, the latest in a series of measures to invigorate sluggish inoculation rates.

France will announce new COVID containment measures on Thursday as the infection rate surges nationwide.

Italy is expected to restrict access to some indoor venues for people who have not been vaccinated.

Poland will have to tighten restrictions if it does not see daily case numbers decreasing in the near future, the health minister said.

Many German regions have already started to impose tighter rules amid the country’s worst COVID surge yet as the curtain comes down on the Angela Merkel era, including demanding that vaccinated people show a negative test to attend indoor events.

Outgoing Health Minister Jens Spahn said on Monday that by the end of the winter almost everyone in Germany would be “vaccinated, recovered or dead”.