

KUWAIT (Middle East Eye) – Kuwait has signed a deal to purchase the Turkish-made Bayraktar TB2 armed drones, the arms manufacturer Baykar announced on Wednesday. The company said in a tweet that it secured the deal, worth \$370m, ahead of companies from the U.S., Europe and China. Bayraktar TB2 drones have a proven track record in conflicts in Libya and Nagorno-Karabakh. But they had not been used against an army with sophisticated electronic warfare capabilities and state-of-the-art air defence systems until the conflict in Ukraine. Twenty-eight countries use Bayraktar TB2s, including NATO ally Poland.

If a Pedestrian walks alongside a rider it is corruption, (ie, a false sense of superiority) for the rider and humiliation for the pedestrian.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

Hamas: No Release of Zionist Captives Without 'Honorable Swap'

China Slams U.S. for 'Blatant, Egregious' Plundering of Syria's Natural Reserves



A U.S. tanker belonging to the American occupation forces in an undisclosed location in Syria

BEIJING (Dispatches) – China has denounced the United States over its “blatant and egregious” attempts to further plunder natural resources in Syria, stating that American occupation forces are massively smuggling crude oil and grain from the northeastern part of the war-torn country to their bases in northern Iraq.

“We are struck by the blatancy and egregiousness of the U.S.’s plundering of Syria. According to Syrian government data, in the first half of 2022, over 80% of Syria’s daily oil output was smuggled out of the country by U.S. occupation troops,” Spokesman for the Chinese Foreign Ministry Wang Wenbin said at a weekly press briefing in the capital, Beijing.

He added that U.S. troops used 60 tankers and trucks earlier this month to steal oil and wheat from Syria.

“Such banditry is aggravating the energy crisis and humanitarian disaster in Syria. The Syrian nation’s right to life is being ruthlessly trampled on by the U.S. With little oil and food to go by, Syrians are struggling even harder to get through the bitter winter,” the Chinese diplomat pointed out.

“The level of U.S. greed in stealing resources from Syria is as striking as its generosity in giving out military aid often in the amount of billions or even tens of billions dollars. Whether the U.S. gives or takes, it plunges other countries into turmoil and disaster, and the U.S. gets to reap the benefits for its hegemony and other interests,” Wang said.

The spokesman emphasized that the US must answer to Syrians and the international community for its oil theft.

“We urge the U.S. to stop trampling on international rule of law and breaking international rules,” he stated.

The U.S. military has for long stationed its forces and equipment in northeastern Syria, with the Pentagon claiming that the deployment is aimed at preventing the oilfields in the area from falling into the hands of Daesh Takfirri terrorists.

Damascus, however, says the deployment is meant to plunder the Arab country’s natural resources. Former U.S. president Donald Trump admitted on several occasions that American forces were in the Arab country for its oil wealth.

Zionists Deport Italian Activist Detained During Raid at Home of Jailed Palestinian

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime’s authorities have deported an Italian activist after arresting her during a raid on the home of an imprisoned Palestinian journalist in the Dheisheh refugee camp in the Bethlehem area of the occupied West Bank.

Stefania Constantin, 52, was arrested during a pre-dawn raid Monday.

The occupying regime’s so-called internal security service, Shin Bet, explained that: “Constantin entered Israel on 2 May, 2022 on a tourist visa and spent most of her time in the Palestinian Authority territories. She exceeded the permitted entry visa period and was deported.”

The interior ministry confirmed that it had deported the Italian activist on Monday afternoon, after she had been interrogated by Shin Bet. It is alleged that she was a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and that she was summoned for questioning last September. She did not respond to the summons, apparently, and “continued” her activities with the orga-

nization.

“Because of these matters, she was arrested on 16 January for interrogation,” said Shin Bet. “At the end of the investigation, she was transferred to the interior ministry, which decided to deport her from Israel.”

According to Constantin, she was beaten and “thrown on the ground” during her arrest by about 20 soldiers in the house where she was staying. Speaking in Pisa, she told AFP, “I tried to resist and they beat me a lot.”

The Italian Consulate in Al-Quds did not comment on the deportation, noting that it happened on the same day that Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani spoke by phone with his Zionist counterpart, Eli Cohen. Neither of them mentioned the Constantin case.

The occupying regime has been intensifying its military incursions in the occupied West Bank for weeks. Since the beginning of this year alone, 15 Palestinians have been killed by the regime’s armed forces, including four children.



A view of the exhibition held by Hamas to draw attention to situations of detainees in the Zionist regime’s jails within the 10th anniversary of the prisoner swap in 2011, at the Unknown Soldier Monument in Gaza City, Gaza on October 13, 2021.

here along with my colleagues? ... Where is the state and people of Israel?”

The occupying regime seeks the help of Pope Francis to free the Zionists held in the Gaza Strip, according to Israeli media.

Zionist foreign minister Eli Cohen sent a letter to the pontiff to seek his intervention to free the

four captives in the Palestinian territory, Israeli Channel 14 reported.

Cohen also sent letters to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, president of the Geneva-based International Committee of the Red Cross, Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, World Health Organization Director-General

Tedros Adhanom and other UN officials.

Last month, Pope Francis met with the families of the four captives and promised to help for their return.

At least 4,600 Palestinians are held by the Zionist regime, according to Palestinian estimates.

The Egyptian mediators between Hamas and the Zionist regime renewed their willingness to continue the past effort to reach a prisoner exchange deal.

According to the Lebanese newspaper, Al-Akhbar, Hamas recently confirmed, during contact with the Egyptians, its willingness to resume the exchange negotiations at where they ended. This would allow the implementation of the first phase of the deal, represented in the release of the Zionist soldiers, Mengistu and Hisham Al-Sayed, in addition to information about the other two soldiers, Hadar Goldin and Oron Shaul. This is in exchange for the release of the prisoners who had been released as part of the Wafaa Al-Ahrar deal who were re-arrested, as well as women, children, ill, martyrs and long-serving prisoners.

Erdogan Sets Stage for May 14 Turkish Election

ANKARA (AFP) – President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Wednesday signaled that he intended to bring the date of Turkey’s most consequential general election in generations forward by one month to May 14.

The announcement sets the stage for a vote that could either extend Erdogan’s rule into a third decade or turn the country on a sharply more secular -- and potentially predictable -- course.

The 68-year-old leader oversaw years of economic booms and busts as well wars and even a failed but bloody coup.

His supporters revere him for

giving a voice to the marginalized and creating a thriving new middle class in the nation of 85 million people.

But his opponents highlight an authoritarian streak that emerged in the second decade of Erdogan’s rule.

The NATO member’s allies meanwhile remain uneasy about Erdogan’s mercurial foreign policies -- most recently exemplified by his refusal to accept Sweden and Finland’s bids to join the Western defence bloc.

Many analysts think the upcoming election is too close to call.

Erdogan’s opposition enters the campaign divided over everything from policy to strategy and has not agreed on a candidate to field against Erdogan.

Turkey’s next general election is officially due to be held on June 18.

But Erdogan’s allies have been hinting for weeks that they may bring the polls forward because of religious holidays and school exams.

Erdogan delivered a campaign-style speech to his ruling party Wednesday in which he recalled the day contemporary Turkey held its first free election in 1950.

That May 14 vote was won by Adnan Menderes -- a prime minister who was toppled by a military junta in 1960 and executed a year later.

Erdogan was himself deposed and briefly jailed when he was mayor of Istanbul in the 1990s and often compares himself to Menderes.

“The late Menderes said on May 14, 1950 ‘enough, the people will have their say’, and emerged victorious at the ballot box,” Erdogan said in televised remarks.

“Our people will give their answer to the (opposition) on the same day 73 years later.”

UN’s Top Woman in Afghanistan for Talks on Taliban Crackdown

UNITED NATIONS (AP) – The highest-ranking woman in the United Nations is in Kabul at the head of a delegation promoting the rights of women and girls, a response to the recent crackdown by Afghanistan’s Taliban rulers.

Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, a former Nigerian Cabinet minister and a Muslim, was joined by Sima Bahous, executive director of UN Women, the UN agency promoting gender equality and women’s rights, and Assistant Secretary General for political affairs Khaled Khiari, UN deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said.

Haq said he could not disclose their schedule or specific meetings in Kabul for security reasons.

UN officials have held a series of high-level consultations across the Persian Gulf, Asia and Europe “to discuss the situation in Afghanistan

in an effort to promote and protect women’s and girls’ rights, peaceful coexistence and sustainable development,” the spokesman said.

Members of the delegation met with leaders of the 57-nation Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Islamic Development Bank, groups of Afghan women in Ankara, Turkey, and Islamabad, and a group of ambassadors and special envoys to Afghanistan based in Doha, the capital of Qatar, he said.

“Throughout the visits,” Haq said, “countries and partners recognized the critical role of the UN in finding a pathway to a lasting solution as well as the need to continue to deliver lifesaving support” and asked that efforts be intensified “to reflect the urgency of the situation.”

A Dec. 24 order from the Taliban barring aid groups from employing women is paralyzing

deliveries that help keep millions of Afghans alive, and threatening humanitarian services countrywide. As another result of the ban, thousands of women who work for such organizations across the war-battered country are facing the loss of income they desperately need to feed their own families. The Taliban previously banned girls from attending secondary schools and women from attending universities and issued restrictions on foreign travel and their movements within the country.

The Taliban took power again in August 2021 following the chaotic withdrawal of U.S. and NATO forces after 20 years of occupation of Afghanistan. As it did when it first ruled the country from 1996 to 2001, the Taliban has gradually reimposed its laws, driving women out of schools, jobs and aid work, and increasingly into their homes.