

BAGHDAD (Xinhua) – The Iraqi military has said that it has killed at least two Daesh terrorists in an airstrike in Salahudin Province, north of Baghdad. According to a statement from the Joint Operations Command's media office, the militants were spotted by Iraqi forces in a rocky area near the town of Tur Khurmato, which is located in eastern Salahudin. They were killed when Iraqi airplanes attacked their position with an airstrike. Meanwhile, a roadside bomb explosion wounded two soldiers of the government forces in the eastern Diyala province on Saturday. Colonel Alaa al-Saadi from the Diyala police said, adding the soldiers were hunting down Daesh terrorists in orchards near the provincial capital Baquba.

Tens of Thousands Hold Largest Protest Against Netanyahu

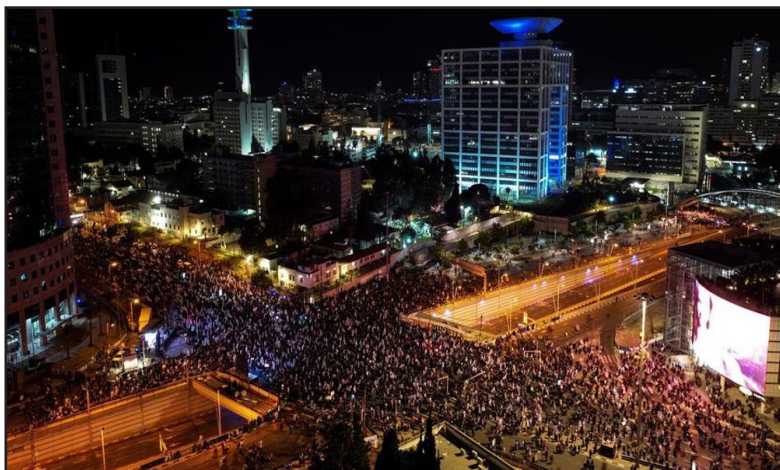
WEST BANK (Dispatches) – Tens of thousands held massive demonstrations on Saturday against Zionist prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's new cabinet that protesters say will threaten the regime's future.

The demonstration was the largest so far since Netanyahu returned to power last month at the head of the most right-wing cabinet in the regime's history.

More than 100,000 people took part in the demonstration, with participants warning that his extremist cabinet's proposed so-called judicial reforms were set to give the regime more control over appointments in the judiciary.

Netanyahu has dismissed the protests, which are now in their third week, as a refusal by leftist opponents to accept the results of last November's election, which produced one of the most extremist cabinets in the regime's history.

Former Zionist prime minister,



Thousands of protesters opposing prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's new extremist cabinet and its proposed judicial pour into the streets of Tel Aviv, the occupied territories, January 21, 2023.

Yair Lapid, also joined tens of thousands of protesters in the Saturday rally.

The Tel Aviv demonstration also drew opponents to the regime's occupation of the Palestinian territories, as many cabinet members are ardent supporters of settlement

expansion across the West Bank.

The 73-year-old prime minister has already released a policy statement on the part of his cabinet, calling expansion of the settlements across the occupied Palestinian territories a top priority.

Saturday's protest also came

days after the supreme court ordered the premier to fire interior minister Aryeh Deri, who leads the Shas party, over a recent tax conviction.

The court ruled that Deri's appointment was "extremely unreasonable," coming only months after he was fined and relinquished his parliamentary seat.

Meanwhile, Netanyahu fired a key cabinet ally on Sunday, heeding a supreme court ruling commanding him to do so and deepening a rift over the power of the courts.

Netanyahu announced he was firing Aryeh Deri, who serves as interior and health minister, at a meeting of his cabinet. The regimes supreme court decided last week Deri could not serve as a Cabinet minister because of a conviction last year over tax offenses.

The court ruling came as Israel is mired in a dispute over the power of the judiciary.

Nations Condemn Desecration of Holy Qur'an in Stockholm



Counter-protesters demonstrating against an anti-Muslim movement's intention to burn a Qur'an clash with police on April 15, 2022.

CAIRO (Dispatches) – Regional countries have condemned an anti-Islam move by a notorious extremist politician to desecrate a copy of the Holy Qur'an in the Swedish capital of Stockholm.

Jordan, Kuwait, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Pakistan among others voiced their anger over the desecration of the Muslim's holy text.

The condemnation came after right-wing leader Rasmus Paludan received permission from his country's government to burn the sacred Muslim book in front of the Turkish embassy in Stockholm on Saturday. The notorious racist was protected by the police while committing the blasphemous act.

Jordan censured the burning of a copy of the Holy Qur'an, stressing the kingdom's rejection of the act that "fuels hatred."

It underscored the necessity to spread the culture of peace and acceptance, saying that "condemning extremism is a collective responsibility."

Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al Jaber Al Sabah said in statements cited by the state news agency KUNA that the incident "hurts Muslims' sentiments across the world and marks serious provocation."

He called on the international community "to shoulder responsibility by stopping such unacceptable acts and denouncing all forms of hatred and extremism and bringing the perpetrators to accountability."

Egypt also expressed its strong condemnation of the disgraceful act that provokes the feelings of nearly two billion Muslims around the world.

Warning of the dangers of the spread of such acts that offend religions and fuel hate speech and violence, Egypt called for "upholding the values of tolerance and peaceful coexistence and preventing offense to all religions and their sanctities through such extremist practices that contradict the values of respect for religion."

The United Arab Emirates said the sacrilegious act was against "all practices aimed at destabilizing security and stability in contravention of human and moral values and principles."

Qatar also condemned the Swedish authorities' permission to burn the Holy Qur'an and called on the international community to shoulder its responsibilities to reject hatred and violence.

"We condemn in the strongest possible terms the vile attack on our holy book, the Qur'an, in Sweden today (21 January), despite our repeated warnings earlier," a Turkish Foreign Ministry statement said.

Calling the act "an outright hate crime," the ministry said, "Permitting this anti-Islam act, which targets Muslims and insults our sacred values, under the guise of freedom of expression is completely unacceptable."

"This despicable act is yet another example of the alarming level that Islamophobia and, racist and discriminatory movements have reached in Europe."

Also, Pakistan's Foreign Ministry said in a statement, "This senseless and provocative Islamophobic act hurts the religious sensitivities of over 1.5 billion Muslims around the world."

Such actions are "not covered under any legitimate expression of the right to freedom of expression or opinion, which carries responsibilities under international human rights law, such as the obligation not to carry out hate speech and incite people to violence."

"Pakistan's concerns are being conveyed to the authorities in Sweden. We urge them to be mindful of the sentiments of the people of Pakistan and the Muslims worldwide and take steps to prevent Islamophobic acts," the statement added.

Moreover, Secretary General of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Nayef Falah al-Hajraf censured the Swedish authorities for allowing an extremist to burn the Holy Qur'an, which would "in flame and provoke the feelings of Muslims around the world."

In an official statement, Hajraf affirmed the GCC's firm conviction in the importance of spreading the "values of dialogue, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence, and rejecting hatred and extremism," calling on the international community to assume responsibility to stop such unacceptable acts.

Furthermore, the Palestinian resistance movement, Hamas, in a statement condemned the provocative act, calling on the international community to hold the perpetrators accountable.

"This act is a provocation to the feelings of all Muslims, and a blatant aggression against their faith," Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem said, adding that the extremist behavior would "spread hatred and incite violence and create a fertile environment for extremism."

Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement also said in a statement that the "criminal act comes in the context of a long series of disgraceful insults to Muslim sanctities."

"We call on Islamic governments and religious authorities to denounce this abuse and work to form a global public opinion to prevent the recurrence of these violations," it added.

Bahraini Opposition Expresses Deep Concern Over Political Prisoners' Health Condition

MANAMA (Dispatches) – The al-Wefaq National Islamic Society, Bahrain's main opposition group, has expressed serious concern about the unhealthy conditions in the tiny Persian Gulf kingdom's detention centers, saying that political prisoners suffer high rates of chronic health conditions.

Al-Wefaq, in a statement released on Saturday night, announced that the imprisoned campaigners are exposed to various forms of mental and physical health conditions, denouncing their mistreatment as criminal and potentially fatal.

"Leaked documents from dozens of political prisoners indicate that the inmates are being kept in very terrible conditions," the

statement read.

The Bahraini opposition group criticized the international community's indifference to the miserable condition of imprisoned political inmates and deplored Western governments' 'fake' advocacy for human rights.

"Depriving inmates of drinking water, treatment and medical supplies, heat and hot water, sunlight and contact with family, in addition to other inhumane conditions amount to a crime and represent a systematic assault on the lives of political prisoners. These detainees are being held behind bars for their advocacy of human rights, and fighting for legitimate political and humanitarian demands as well as civil liberties," al-Wefaq said.

"Political prisoners in Bahrain have been arrested, tortured, and sentenced to lengthy jail terms, stripped of their citizenship and isolated politically and socially, only because they demanded democracy, justice, freedom, and respect for human rights," the statement added.

The Bahraini opposition group denounced the Al Khalifah regime's heavy-handed clampdown as suffocating and atrocious, stating that continuation of the status quo will shut the door to reconciliation.

Anti-monarchy demonstrations began in mid-February 2011 and have been held on a regular basis ever since the popular uprising started.

Demonstrators demand that the

Al Khalifah regime relinquish power, and a democratic, just system representing all Bahrainis be established.

The Manama regime, however, has responded to demands for social equality with an iron fist, clamping down on voices of dissent.

In March 2017, Bahrain's parliament approved the trial of opposition civilians at military tribunals in a measure blasted by human rights campaigners as being tantamount to the imposition of an undeclared martial law.

The monarch, King Hamad, ratified the constitutional amendment in April 2017, bringing about further suppression of political dissent in the tiny Persian Gulf Island under the strong influence of the Saudi regime.

Building Collapse in Syria's Aleppo Kills 16

ALEPPO (AFP) – A building collapsed Sunday in Syria's second city of Aleppo, killing 16 people including children, authorities and media reported.

Much of Aleppo was destroyed during the foreign-backed war in Syria that began nearly 12 years ago and left many of the remaining structures in a decrepit state.

"The number of victims of the residential building collapse... has risen to 16 dead", said state news agency SANA.

Only one person had been rescued alive from the rubble of the five-storey building which was home to seven families, Syria's interior ministry said.

It was not immediately clear if anyone else had survived the tragedy in the city which was Syria's pre-war commercial hub.

Earlier Sunday SANA gave an initial death toll of 10, which rose throughout the day as search operations continued.

A Kurdish news agency said five children were among the dead. The victims included Syrians who had been displaced during the country's years of fighting, a war monitor said.

Locals told AFP that about 35 people lived in the building.

Video footage shared on state television showed dozens of rescue workers at the site. Earth movers scooped up the pieces of building material, sending dust into the air.

SANA quoted a police source as saying earlier that the building, in Aleppo's Sheikh Maksoud neighborhood, had collapsed "due to a water leak" in the foundations.

The neighborhood is predominantly inhabited by Syrian Kurds who are under the authority of the so-called People's Protection Units (YPG) militia.

Aleppo itself is, however, under control of the government which took it back from militants during devastating urban combat.

The British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported that among the victims were displaced people from Afrin, further north, where neighbouring Turkey carried out an offensive in 2018.

Nearly half a million people have been killed in the war in Syria which began in 2011 and displaced about half of the country's pre-war population.

Many of those forced from their homes had to move into buildings that are structurally unsound, resulting in relatively frequent collapses.

Last September, a building collapse in the Ferdaws neighborhood of Aleppo killed 10 people, including three children.

A war-damaged block of flats also crumbled in the city in February 2019, leaving 11 people dead with four children among them.