

Yemeni Wrestler Avoids Facing Zionist Rival in France

SANA’A (Dispatches) – In a show of strong solidarity with the Palestinian nation and outright rejection of normalization with the Zionist regime, Yemeni freestyle wrestler Ebrahim al-Shabami has pulled out of the 2023 Grand Prix de France Henri Deglane in France to avoid facing a Zionist opponent.

Shabami was set to participate in the 61-kilogram division of the international tournament at Salle Leyrit in the southeastern French port city of Nice. He, however, withdrew from the competitions as soon as he found out he was scheduled to take on Zionist rival Daniel Popov.

The 2023 Grand Prix de France Henri Deglane kicked off on January 20, and wrapped up on January 22.

The development comes as athletes from Muslim countries have repeatedly refused to compete



Yemeni freestyle wrestler Ebrahim al-Shabami (L)

against Zionist opponents at major international events to protest the regime’s crimes and occupation of Palestinian land.

Last May, a Kuwaiti wheelchair fencer withdrew from the second International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports Federation (IWAS)

World Cup of 2022 in Thailand over a draw that set her on course for a match-up against a Zionist opponent.

“Kuwaiti player Kholoud al-Mutairi pulled out of the International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports Federation (IWAS) World Cup in

Thailand in order not to compete against a contestant from the Zionist entity,” the Kuwait Paralympic Committee wrote in a post published on its Twitter page at the time.

Earlier that month, Kuwaiti chess player Bader al-Hajri snubbed a Zionist opponent at Spain’s Sunway International Chess Championship, in an act of solidarity with the Palestinian people and a blow to the occupying regime’s status in the world.

The Fédération Internationale des Échecs (FIDE) master, who had secured first place at the 2015 San Sebastian chess tournament in Spain, withdrew on May 3 from the competitions to refuse to face a Zionist competitor.

On social media, Arab activists lauded al-Hajri as a champion of “rejecting Arab countries’ normalization” with the regime by refusing to face “an Israeli settler.”

Jordan’s King Meets Zionist PM Netanyahu in Amman

AMMAN (Dispatches) – Jordan’s King Abdullah II on Tuesday hosted Zionist prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Amman in a rare meeting after years of strained relations between the two.

The royal palace said they discussed the situation in Al-Quds’ Al-Aqsa mosque compound and “the importance of respecting the historical and legal status quo”.

Netanyahu, who previously served as prime minister from 2009 to 2021, returned to power last month at the head of a coalition that includes extreme-right and ultra-Orthodox parties.

Netanyahu’s office said the Zionist premier discussed “regional issues” and bilateral ties with the Jordanian king.

The two last met in Jordan in 2018. Tuesday’s visit to Amman was Ne-

tanyahu’s first official trip abroad since taking office.

The prime minister was joined by strategic affairs minister Ron Dermer and Ronen Bar, head of the Shin Bet domestic spy agency, as well as adviser Tzachi Hanegbi and Netanyahu’s military secretary Avi Gil, an Israeli official said.

Zionist Minister Visits UAE

Meanwhile, Israeli media reports say Ron Dermer has made a secret trip to the United Arab Emirates ahead of a possible visit to the Persian Gulf state by Netanyahu.

Dermer travelled on Sunday to Abu Dhabi, where he met senior officials, the Israeli news website Walla reported on Monday.

Alongside Dermer was Hanegbi.

The trip would be the first by a Zionist minister to the UAE since the new cabinet of the occupying regime came into power at the end of December.

Netanyahu had been expected to make a visit to the UAE shortly after he returned to the premiership, but the entrance of his provocative right-wing minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, to Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in January led to the cancellation of the UAE trip, according to Israeli media outlets.

The UAE issued a public condemnation of Ben-Gvir’s actions at the time.

On his trip to the UAE, Dermer tried to allay some of the concerns regarding Ben-Gvir and other far-right members of the Zionist regime cabinet, according to the reports.

The occupying regime and the UAE normalized ties in 2020 under the

United States-brokered Abraham Accords and have since strengthened their relations, including by signing a free trade agreement in May.

Dermer served as the regime’s ambassador to the U.S. when the accords were signed.

Naftali Bennett, a right-wing politician who succeeded Netanyahu as prime minister in 2021, became the first Zionist leader to make a state visit to the UAE in December of the same year before visiting again for talks in June last year.

The UAE lies at the center of the regime’s strategy of normalizing ties with Arab governments despite its continued occupation of Palestinian territory and near-daily raids in the occupied West Bank, which have already killed 17 Palestinians this month.

Tragedy...

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News of the massacre in Half Moon Bay surfaced as police worked through a second full day of their investigation into the shooting at the Star Ballroom Dance Studio in Monterey Park, just east of downtown Los Angeles, where a gunman shot 11 people to death. Nine others were wounded.

Authorities said the suspect, Huu Can Tran, 72, drove next to an adjacent town and barged into a second dance hall but was confronted by the club’s operator, who wrestled the weapon away during a brief scuffle.

Tran, himself a longtime patron of the Star Ballroom, catering mainly to older dance enthusiasts, fled again and vanished overnight.

He shot himself to death in his parked getaway vehicle, a cargo van, on Sunday morning, about 12 hours after his rampage, as police surrounded him in the town of Torrance, south of Los Angeles, authorities said.

Saturday’s violence unfolded in the midst of a Chinese Lunar New Year celebration in Monterey Park, a hub of the Asian-American community in Southern California, giving rise initially to concerns the attack may have been racially motivated. The second day of the event was canceled.

It ranked as the deadliest mass shooting ever in Los Angeles County, according to Hilda Solis, a member of the county Board of Supervisors.

By comparison, the 1984 massacre of 21 people at a McDonald’s restaurant in San Diego stands as the greatest loss of life from a single shooting incident on record in California.

The two latest shootings were also notable for the age of the suspects, one in his late 60s, another in his early 70s.

A database of 185 mass shootings between 1966 and 2022 maintained by the nonprofit Violence Project includes just one carried out by someone 70 or older - a retired miner who killed five people in Kentucky in 1981.

Attesting to the firepower unleashed at the Monterey Park ballroom, investigators collected 42 bullet casings and a large-capacity ammunition magazine from the scene, Los Angeles County Sheriff Robert Luna told reporters on Monday.

He said a search of the suspect’s mobile home in a gated senior-living community in the town of Hemet, 80 miles east of Los Angeles, turned up a rifle, electronic devices and items “that lead us to believe the suspect was manufacturing homemade” weapons silencers. Police also seized hundreds of rounds of ammunition from the dwelling and a handgun from the suspect’s vehicle.

Monterey Park Police Chief Scott Wiese said investigators were looking into unconfirmed reports that the violence may have been sparked by jealousy or relationship issues.

Adam Hood, who rented a home from Tran in the Los Angeles area, told Reuters his landlord was a regular at the Star Ballroom, though he complained that others there were talking behind his back.

“He was distrustful of the people at the studio, angry and distrustful. I think he just had enough,” Hood said.

Ukraine...

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came to power in 2019 on an anti-establishment and anti-corruption platform.

Tymoshenko joined the presidential office in 2019, after working on Zelensky’s media and creative content strategy during his presidential campaign.

“I want to be clear: There will be no return to what used to be in the past,” Zelensky said.

Tymoshenko was last year under investigation relating to his personal use of luxury cars. He was also among officials linked last September by an investigator working with the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine to the embezzlement of humanitarian aid worth more than \$7 million earmarked for the southern Zaporizhzhia region.

On Sunday, a deputy minister at the infrastructure ministry, Vasyly Lozynsky, was dismissed for being part of a network allegedly embezzling budget funds.

Oleksandr Kubrakov, the infrastructure minister, said Lozynsky was relieved of his duties after Ukraine’s anti-corruption agency detained him while he was receiving a \$400,000 bribe for helping to fix contracts related to restoring facilities battered by Russian missile strikes.

Meanwhile, the delivery of an expected 14 Leopard tanks from Poland appeared to be a foregone conclusion, with the main outstanding question being when it will happen.

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said Sunday that Berlin wouldn’t seek to stop Poland providing the versatile tanks to Kyiv if it asked, and Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said Tuesday the Poles — and other Western allies he didn’t identify — are already training Ukrainian soldiers in Poland on the Leopards.

German officials confirmed to the dpa news agency they had received the Polish application and said it would be assessed “with due urgency.”

Poland is a leading advocate in the EU for giving military aid to help Ukraine prevail 11 months after the war began. Though Germany has become one of Ukraine’s main weapons suppliers, other Western allies — especially Poland and the Baltic countries on NATO’s eastern flank that feel especially threatened by Russia — have shown impatience with Chancellor Olaf Scholz’s perceived slowness to act.

Polish Defense Minister Mariusz Blaszczak appealed to Germany “to join the coalition of countries supporting Ukraine with Leopard 2 tanks” — a reference to recent pressure on Berlin to send some of its own tanks. Germany has hesitated to take that step, despite Ukraine’s pleas.

“This is our common cause, because it is about the security of the whole of Europe!” Blaszczak tweeted.

Morawiecki aimed another political broadside at Berlin.

“I hope the response from the German side comes quickly this time, because the Germans are lingering, dodging, acting in a way that is difficult to understand,” Morawiecki said.

He claimed Germany was unwilling to defend Ukraine more broadly and speculated on why that might be: “Does it mean fear, some not entirely comprehensible dread or faith that a return to normal relations with Russia is possible?”

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg called for the speedy delivery of new weapons to Ukraine, where a broad battlefield stalemate is expected to give way to new offensives in the spring.

“At this crucial moment in the war, we need to provide Ukraine with heavier and more advanced systems, and we need to do it faster,” Stoltenberg said Tuesday after talks with German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius in Berlin.

Polish officials have indicated that Finland and Denmark are ready to join Warsaw in sending Leopards to Ukraine. Poland wants to send a 14-strong company of the tanks, but these would barely make an impression in a war that involves thousands of tanks. If other countries contribute, Warsaw reckons, the tank detachment could grow in size.

Spain...

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However, opposition parties have accused the government of failing to protect women by introducing controversial legislation that has allowed some convicted sex offenders to have their sentences reduced on appeal.

Spain’s “only yes means yes” law — which was brought in following widespread anger over the “wolf-pack” gang-rape in Pamplona in 2016 — has made consent a key factor in sexual assault cases.

But it has also revised the scope of potential minimum and maximum prison sentences, allowing some convicted sex offenders to appeal against their sentences and have them reduced. By the end of December, 129 convicted offenders had benefited from the sentencing changes.

The Pamplona attack — known as the “wolf pack” case after the name the rapists gave themselves — shocked Spain and provoked a fierce debate over its sexual offences legislation.

There were protests around the country after the judges presiding over the original trial cleared the five of gang-rape and convicted them only of the lesser charge of sexual abuse.

In June 2019, Spain’s supreme court overturned the regional court’s verdict, ruled that the men had committed rape, and raised their sentences from nine to 15 years each.

In September that year, protesters took to the streets of more than 250 towns and cities across Spain to declare a “feminist emergency” after a series of high-profile rape cases and a summer in which 19 women were murdered by current or former partners.

IRGC ...

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The IRGC chief also stressed the importance of developing defense and military cooperation between Syria and Iran, noting, “We are ready to help the Syrian armed forces in the required dimensions and fields.”

The Syrian armed forces, with the resistance of the Syrian people and the unwavering support of Iran and Hezbollah “will teach the enemy a lesson,” Abbas said. “We will achieve a great victory, which is the cleansing of the Syrian soil from the invaders with God’s assistance and by inflicting deadly blows on the enemy.”

“Thanks to the resistance, the enemy is retreating on a daily basis, and we emphasize that the U.S. policies in the region are deteriorating and have caused them to suffer other failures in other regions,” he added.

The Syrian defense minister also highlighted the necessity of promoting cooperation between Syria and Iran in various military and training sectors in order to stand against and defeat the enemies.

Emotional...

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in the fields of modern technologies, knowledge-based industries and digitalized economic activities, expressing Iran’s readiness to share its experience with member states of the organization in this regard.

Moving on to the issue of neighboring Afghanistan, Amir-Abdollahian said the establishment of an inclusive government in the war-ravaged country will help Kabul implement its reconstruction plans and reduce the threats of terrorist operations, refugees and smuggling of narcotics in the region.

He said that Iran has always supported the effective implementation of the ECO’s policy on supporting Afghanistan, which he called a “very important member” of the organization.

“In addition to its responsible performance within the regional frameworks, the Islamic Republic of Iran is also committed to its undertakings in the international arena,” he said.

“It is among the Islamic Republic of Iran’s priorities to pay heed to human rights issues in line with national and Islamic principles, the Constitution, and international commitments.”

Iran has always welcomed dialogue based on mutual respect and constructive interaction with its partners, he added.

Egypt Archaeologists Uncover ‘Complete’ Roman City

CAIRO (AFP)– Egyptian archaeologists said Tuesday they had discovered an 1,800-year-old “complete residential city from the Roman-era” in the heart of the southern city of Luxor.

The city, dating to the second and third centuries, is the “oldest and most important city found on the eastern bank of Luxor,” according to Mostafa Waziri, head of Egypt’s Supreme Council of Antiquities.

Archaeologists discovered “a number of residential buildings”, as well as “two pigeon towers” -- a structure used to house pigeons or doves -- and a “number of metal workshops,” Waziri said in a statement.

Inside the workshops, researchers found a collection of pots, tools and “bronze and copper Roman

coins.”

It is a rare archaeological find in Egypt, where excavations -- including on Luxor’s west bank, where the famous Valley of the Queens and Valley of the Kings lie -- are most commonly of temples and tombs.

In April 2021, authorities announced the discovery of a 3,000-year-old “lost golden city” on Luxor’s west bank, with the archaeological team calling it “the largest” ancient city ever uncovered in Egypt.

Egypt has unveiled several major archaeological discoveries in recent years.

Critics say the flurry of excavations has prioritized finds shown to grab media attention over hard

academic research.

But the discoveries have been a key component of Egypt’s attempts to revive its vital tourism industry after years of political unrest, as well as after the Covid pandemic.

The government’s plans -- the crowning jewel of which is the long-delayed inauguration of the Grand Egyptian Museum at the foot of the pyramids in Giza -- aim to draw in 30 million tourists a year by 2028, up from 13 million before the pandemic.

The country of 104 million inhabitants is suffering from a severe economic crisis, and Egypt’s tourism industry accounts for 10 percent of GDP and some two million jobs.