

RAMALLAH (Xinhua) – A marathon game has been held in the West Bank city of Bethlehem, with 10,000 runners from across the world competing in an enthusiastic atmosphere.

Themed "Run for Freedom," and held by the Ramallah-based Supreme Council for Youth and Sports of the PA, the ninth game saw the participation of 1,800 foreigners from 90 countries and regions.

The race was held to send a message that "Palestinians are looking forward to living in peace and freedom in their independent state," according to the organizer.

I wonder at the mentality of a miser, fearing poverty. He takes to stinginess and thus hastily pushes himself head-long into a state of want and destitution, he madly desires plenty and ease, but throws it away without understanding.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

## 3 Palestinians Martyred in West Bank

AL-QUDS (Dispatches) – Zionist troops shot and martyred three Palestinians Sunday in the occupied West Bank, the military said, the latest bloodshed in a year-long wave of violence in the region.

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, an armed offshoot of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah party, claimed the martyrs as members.

The Palestinian Health Ministry said the men were killed by Zionist fire near the city of Nablus and identified them as Jihad Mohammed al-Shami, 24, Uday Othman al-Shami, 22 and Mohammed Raed Dabeek, 18.

The killings took place at dawn on Sunday when Zionist troops opened fire at four Palestinians in their vehicle near the Sarra military checkpoint, southwest of Nablus, according to the Palestinian Ma'an news agency.

The troops arrested the fourth Palestinian after the shooting near the checkpoint.

The occupation fired at four Palestinians at the checkpoint, killing three of them while inside their vehicle in a "targeted assassination," the official Wafa news agency said.



People carry the body of a Palestinian killed by Zionist forces during a funeral in the West Bank city of Nablus, on Feb. 8, 2022.

Wafa cited witnesses in the village adjacent to the checkpoint as saying that shortly after the shooting, occupation troops stormed shops and seized the recordings of surveillance cameras to keep their crime untold.

The latest Zionist crime brings up the number of Palestinians killed by occupation forces since the beginning of the year to 84, including 15 children and an elderly woman, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry.

The killings came two days after Zionist troops killed three Pal-

estinians in a raid in Jenin in the northern occupied West Bank, less than 48 hours after six others were killed in another raid in the city.

The Palestinian Ministry of Health said the three men shot dead on Thursday morning were identified as Ahmad Fashafsheh, 22, Sufian Fakhouri, 26, and Nayef Malaysheh, 25.

The three Palestinian men were shot dead inside a car in the village of Jaba, south of Jenin, in what has been described by Palestinians as an "execution."

Over the past months, the oc-

cupying regime has ramped up attacks on Palestinian towns and cities throughout the occupied territories. As a result of these attacks, dozens of Palestinians have lost their lives and many others have been arrested.

Most of the raids have focused on Nablus and Jenin, where Zionist troops have been trying to stifle a growing Palestinian resistance in the occupied cities.

Local and international rights groups have condemned the regime's excessive use of force and "shoot-to-kill policy" against Palestinians.

In another development, left-wing activists in occupied Palestine staged a protest in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in East Al-Quds to show their support for Palestinians who are facing displacement from their homes.

They rejected the displacement policy implemented by the occupying regime's army in the area.

Last week, rights group Adalah called on the Zionist regime's supreme court to put pressure on the Tel Aviv regime to remove the checkpoints erected at the entrances to the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood.

## NYT: Riyadh Seeks U.S. Security, Nuclear Guarantees Before Zionist Normalization



Palestinians wave Palestine flags during a protest against the agreement to establish diplomatic ties between the Zionist regime, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, in the West Bank city Tubas 27 September 2020.

RIYADH (Dispatches) – Saudi Arabia is reportedly seeking a number of conditions to be met by the United States in return for its normalization of relations with the Zionist regime, a report has claimed.

According to the New York Times, Saudi Arabia has said that it could potentially normalize ties with the occupying regime if the U.S. provides it with security guarantees, assistance in its civilian nuclear program, and the lifting of restrictions on arms sales to the kingdom.

Those intentions and conditions were reportedly communicated to Washington by senior Saudi officials last year, when they talked to policy experts in the U.S. such as members of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy – a pro-Zionist think tank – who visited Riyadh in October.

Robert Satloff, the institute's executive director and a member of the visiting delegation, then wrote in a report that senior Saudi leaders at the time had "bitterly noted what they believe was U.S. indifference to Saudi security concerns."

The NYT cited two anonymous sources familiar with the matter, who said that the American negotiations are being led by the National Security Council's coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa, Brett McGurk, as well as President Joe Biden's top aide for global energy issues, Amos Hochstein.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had reportedly initially played a direct role in the negotiations, but more lately they were

taken over by the Saudi ambassador in Washington, Princess Reema bint Bandar Al Saud.

Neither the U.S. nor Saudi Arabia have yet commented on the revelation, but analysts have noted that if Biden and his administration are willing to meet those demands, U.S. Congress would likely be a major stumbling block due to the fact that many members – especially Democrats – have expressed opposition to special ties with the kingdom and have pushed to downgrade those relations.

Senator Christopher S. Murphy, a Connecticut Democrat and a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, was quoted as saying that "Our relationship with Saudi Arabia has to be a direct bilateral relationship. It should not run through Israel". Insisting that the Saudis "have been consistently behaving badly, over and over", he asserted that "If we're going to enter into a relationship with the Saudis where we're doing more significant arms sales, it should be in exchange for better behavior toward the United States, not just better behavior toward Israel".

Another prominent obstacle to such a deal is the increasing violence by Zionist settlers in the occupied Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East Al-Quds, which has led to clashes between the settlers – protected by Zionist troops – and Palestinians. Along with that, the regime's troops have been stepping up their raids in cities and camps in the West Bank, killing dozens of Palestinians on a more frequent basis.

## Iraqi PM Promises Action to Tackle Crippling Climate Change

BAGHDAD (AP) – Iraq's prime minister Sunday promised sweeping measures to tackle climate change — which has affected millions across the country — including plans to meet a third of the country's electricity demands using renewable energy.

Climate change for years has compounded the woes of the troubled country. Droughts and increased water salinity have destroyed crops, animals and farms and dried up entire bodies of water. Hospitals have faced waves of patients with respiratory illnesses caused by rampant sandstorms. Climate change has also played a role in Iraq's ongoing struggle to

combat cholera.

"More than seven million citizens have been affected in Iraq ... and hundreds of thousands have been displaced because they lost their livelihoods that rely on agriculture and hunting," Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani said in a speech to open the two-day Iraq Climate Conference in Basra.

Al-Sudani said the Iraqi government is working on a national plan to tackle climate change that consists of a series of measures it hopes to take by 2030. The plan includes building renewable energy plants, modernizing inefficient and outdated irriga-

tion techniques, reducing carbon emissions, combating desertification, and protecting the country's biodiversity.

Among the projects is a massive afforestation initiative, where Iraq would plant 5 million trees across the country. Iraq also hopes to provide one-third of the country's electricity demand through renewable energy instead of fossil fuel.

Al-Sudani said he is hoping to organize a regional conference on climate change in Baghdad in the near future as well.

Developments in neighboring countries have also compounded Iraq's water woes.

Iraq relies on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers for nearly all of its water needs. They flow into the country from Turkey and Iran.

Climate change and its impact on Iraq's water resources and agriculture also comes at an economic cost, destroying people's livelihoods and making it more likely for Iraq to hike up its imports for basic staples that were once heavily produced in the country, such as wheat. The government once subsidized seeds, fertilizer and pesticides to soften the blow of increasing costs on wheat farmers and maintain a high level of production, but slashed them two years ago.

## Media: Syrian Air Defenses Shoot Several Zionist Missiles Down

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – Missiles fired by the Zionist regime targeted a western Syrian city on Sunday wounding three Syrian soldiers, Syrian state media reported.

The official news agency SANA, citing a military source, said the missiles were fired at Masyaf in Hama province at dawn. Syria's air defenses shot several of them down.

Syrian state media did not report any deaths.

However, the Britain-based opposition war monitor so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said the strike targeted a weapons depot and killed three military personnel.

According to the Al Ekhbariya TV channel, the missile strikes were launched against ground targets in the Masyaf area.

As a result, three Syrian soldiers

were wounded. Material damage was also recorded.

The Syrian Arab News Agency quoted a Syrian military statement that the enemy also attacked several positions near Tartus.

"The Israeli aggressive action was launched from the airspace of neighboring Lebanon," the document said, adding, "Our anti-aircraft guns opened fire on enemy targets and struck several missiles."

There was no immediate comment from the occupying regime, which has staged hundreds of strikes on targets in Syria over the years. However, it rarely acknowledges or discusses such operations.

The occupying regime previously attacked Masyaf in May and August 2022 killing five people and wounding two.

The Zionist regime frequently

violates Syrian sovereignty by carrying out missile attacks on targets inside the country, mostly using the airspace of Lebanon or the occupied territories.

The targets include residential buildings. Military positions especially those of the Hezbollah resistance movement, which has played a key role in helping the Syrian army in its fight against foreign-backed terrorists, are also frequently hit by Israeli strikes.

The Tel Aviv regime has been a main supporter of terrorist groups that have battled the government of President Bashar al-Assad since the foreign-backed militancy erupted in Syria in early 2011.

Syria has repeatedly complained to the UN over the assaults, urging the Security Council to take action against Tel Aviv's crimes. The calls have, however, fallen on deaf ears.

## Five People Drown Off Turkey's Southwestern Coast

ANKARA (Al Jazeera) – Five people have drowned in the Aegean Sea off Turkey's southwestern coast after setting out on a rubber dinghy, apparently towards Greece, according to the Turkish coastguard.

The incident took place on Saturday off the town of Didim, in waters of the Turkish province of Aydin, the coastguard said.

In a video released by the Turkish coastguard, refugees and migrants on board a grey inflatable dinghy are seen waving as they are buffeted by rough seas.

"Eleven migrants [10 adults,

one child] were rescued... and the bodies of five were found," the coastguard said in a statement.

Five surviving refugees managed to reach the Greek island of Farmakonisi, 10km (six miles) from the Turkish coast in the province of Aydin, the Greek coastguard said.

According to a witness account by the Greek coastguard, 31 people were on board the boat when it departed.

Deaths in the Aegean happen often, with refugees and migrants boarding makeshift boats even on stormy seas try-

ing to make it to Europe.

A woman and four children died in the same area at the beginning of February after their inflatable boat sank.

Since 2014, 2,269 people have drowned in the eastern Mediterranean, according to the International Organization for Migration.

Further west in the Mediterranean, more than 1,300 have been rescued in three separate operations off the southern tip of Italy, the Italian coastguard said on Saturday, two weeks after at least 74 people died when their boat hit rocks near the coast.