

DALLAS (Al Jazeera) – Former U.S. president George W Bush has decried the “wholly unjustified and brutal invasion of Iraq” in a gaffe during a speech in the U.S. state of Texas. The former president, who launched the 2003 invasion of Iraq under the false pretence that the country was developing weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), meant to decrie the Russian operation in Ukraine during the speech in Dallas. Instead, while criticizing Russia’s political system, he said: “The result is an absence of checks and balances in Russia, and the decision of one man to launch a wholly unjustified and brutal invasion of Iraq. ‘I mean, of Ukraine,’ he said quickly. He then said ‘Iraq too’ to laughter from the crowd.

During civil disturbance adopt such an attitude that people do not attach any importance to you - they neither burden you with complicated affairs, nor try to derive any advantage out of you.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

New Video Shows No Fighting Before Abu Akleh’s Killing

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – New footage has emerged showing no signs of fighting before veteran Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh was killed by Zionist troops in the occupied West Bank last week.

The clip, which contradicts the occupying regime’s initial version of events, was filmed by a Jenin resident and shows quiet moments, with no sounds of fighting between Zionist troops and Palestinian fighters.

In the new video, obtained by Middle East Eye, some people are seen laughing and talking while others in the background, including Abu Akleh and some of her colleagues, are seen wearing visible blue press flak jackets.

Before the shooting, the journalists were seen walking in the direction where Zionist troops were located. Once the shooting starts, people are seen running away from where the troops were positioned, and Abu Akleh is then seen lying in the street after being hit.



A woman lights a candle in front of a poster depicting veteran Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, who was shot dead while covering a Zionist army raid in Jenin, in the West Bank city of Bethlehem on May 11, 2022.

After her death, regime authorities initially said that Palestinian fighters may have been responsible and circulated a video of Palestinian men shooting down a narrow alleyway.

Abu Akleh, a veteran journalist of the Qatar-based Al Jazeera network’s Arabic service, was shot in the head on May 11, when she was reporting on a Zionist raid on

the Jenin refugee camp.

Her tragic death sent shockwaves across the region, drawing global condemnation. The United Nations and the European Union, among others, have called for a full investigation into what has been described as a deliberate killing “in cold blood.”

Over 100 leading artists from across the world condemned the

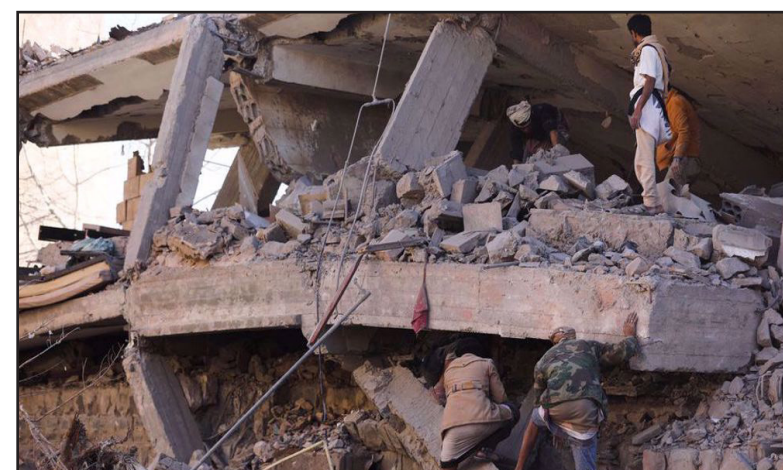
killing of Abu Akleh, demanding accountability for the regime’s crimes.

The artists, including Hollywood stars, acclaimed authors and prominent musicians, condemned the murder in a joint statement on Thursday.

“We are deeply disturbed by the Israeli occupation forces’ killing of the highly respected Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, as she arrived, wearing a clearly marked press vest, to report on an Israeli incursion in the occupied city of Jenin last Wednesday. As we grieve her loss, we call for full accountability for the perpetrators of this crime and everyone involved in authorizing it,” the statement read.

The artists and public figures said “Israeli forces have killed 45 journalists since 2000, injuring many more, simply for doing their job”, lambasting a “pattern of violence, harassment, and intimidation against Palestinian journalists” by the Zionist regime.

Ansarullah: U.S. Setting Up Military Bases in Yemen



Rescuers search for survivors under the collapsed roof of a house hit by Saudi-led airstrikes in Sana’a, Yemen, on January 18, 2022.

SANA’A (Dispatches) – The leader of Yemen’s popular Ansarullah resistance movement says the United States, with the help of its allied militant groups, is building several military bases in the country’s eastern provinces of Hadhramaut and al-Mahrah as well as on the Red Sea coast.

Addressing a delegation of tribal leaders from the western Yemeni province of Ibb on Thursday evening, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi said Washington is setting up military installations in eastern Yemen and the country’s southern coastal city of Aden.

He asserted that the Yemeni nation cannot accept Washington’s diktats, warning that the enemies are hell-bent on sowing the seeds of discord and division among people.

“We must work for security and social stability in Ibb province through compromise and cooperation among local authorities,” the top Yemeni resistance leader told the delegation.

He said the “enemies” have begun to mobilize military reinforcements by taking advantage of the UN-brokered ceasefire, which clearly shows their orientation towards the next stage of the war, and bears testimony to their failure in the previous phase.

“Enemies, having become fairly frustrated with attempts to impose their diktats through ousted Yemeni president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, have decided to remove him

in a humiliating matter,” Houthi said.

“They brought a bunch of criminals, traitors, and thieves to power, and declared them as the leaders of the Yemeni nation. They are actually the picks of outsiders, not Yemenis.”

“It is the traitors and mercenaries who would like to prove their servitude to Saudi or Emirati officers,” he said, calling for an immediate end to foreign domination of the Arab country.

Meanwhile, Houthi also touched on the controversial normalization agreements between the Zionist regime and some Arab countries.

“The parties displaying animosity and military aggression against our nation are the ones that are pushing for the normalization of ties with the Israeli enemy. The enemies’ main goal is to shatter the Yemeni nation’s unity and solidarity, and easily dominate it,” the Ansarullah leader said.

Saudi Arabia launched the devastating war on Yemen in March 2015 in collaboration with its Arab allies and with arms and logistics support from the U.S. and other Western states.

The objective was to reinstall the Riyadh-friendly regime of Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi and crush the Ansarullah resistance movement, which has been running state affairs in the absence of a functional government in Yemen.

Jordan King Places Prince Hamzah Under House Arrest

AMMAN (Al Jazeera) – Jordan’s King Abdullah II has imposed restrictions on the movements, place of residence and communications of his estranged half brother Prince Hamzah, widening a royal rift in the kingdom.

In a strongly worded public letter published on Thursday, King Abdullah II said he had decreed the measures on account of Hamzah’s “erratic behavior and aspirations.”

“We will provide Hamzah with all that he requires to live a comfortable life, but he will not have the space he once abused to offend the nation, its institutions, and his family, nor to undermine Jordan’s stability,” he said.

Abdullah added that his half brother had during the past year or

so “exhausted all opportunities to restore himself on the right path”.

The announcement marked the latest chapter in an ongoing palace feud that saw the junior royal placed under a form of detention last year and the internal disputes of the royal family spill into the public eye.

Abdullah and Hamzah are sons of King Hussein, who ruled Jordan for nearly a half-century before his death in 1999.

Abdullah had appointed Hamzah as crown prince upon his succession, but later stripped him of that title and instead installed his own son as heir as stipulated under the country’s constitution.

Hamzah was placed under house arrest last year after being accused

of trying to destabilize the monarchy, a close ally of the West, in a foreign-inspired plot.

He was later spared punishment after pledging allegiance to the king, but a former royal chief adviser, Bassem Awadallah, and a minor royal were sentenced to 15 years in jail for their involvement in the alleged scheme.

According to the Royal Court, Hamzah said in an apology sent to Abdullah in March that he hoped “we can turn the page on this chapter in our country’s and our family’s history”.

Restrictions on Hamza’s movements were eased after he issued the mea culpa, in which he pledged not to act against the interests of Jordan’s rulers.

But last month he announced he was giving up his royal title, saying his convictions could not be reconciled with the “current approaches, policies and methods” of Jordan’s institutions. That move angered the palace, which says that under royal family laws, titles can be revoked only by the monarch.

In Thursday’s letter, Abdullah lashed out at his half brother, saying he would “never allow our country to be held hostage to the whims of someone who has done nothing to serve [it]”.

Hamzah’s mother, American-born Queen Noor, said on Twitter shortly after the king’s announcement that “some truly bizarre and stranger than fiction stuff (is) circulating right now,” without elaborating.

U.S. Lawmakers Demand Clarification on Khashoggi Ban as Saudi Official Visits

WASHINGTON (Middle East Eye) – Two U.S. lawmakers have sent a letter to the administration of President Joe Biden seeking an explanation as to why Saudi Deputy Defence Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman was granted a U.S. visa, and asking whether or not he is on a list of Saudi citizens barred from entering the U.S. over the 2018 killing of dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

The letter, sent by congressmen Tom Malinowski and Brian Fitzpatrick, comes as Prince Khalid, the younger brother of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), arrives in Washington this week for a series of meetings with U.S. officials.

“According to public reports, Prince Khalid met with senior U.S. government officials, seemingly undermining the administration’s February 2021 statements indicating that you would seek to recalibrate the U.S.-Saudi relationship by engaging your official counterparts,” the letter said.

The prince served as Saudi Arabia’s ambassador to Washington when Khashoggi, also a U.S. resident, was murdered in 2018.

Khashoggi’s killing inside the Saudi consulate in the Turkish city of Istanbul back in October 2018 raised a global outcry and put pressure on the Saudi crown

prince.

U.S. intelligence agencies admitted last year that Mohammed bin Salman ordered a team of Saudi operatives to kill Khashoggi. In February, the Biden administration confirmed the crown prince had masterminded the brutal murder.

‘Biden May Meet MBS’

The developments come as Biden may meet in person with the Saudi crown prince as early as next month, according to a report by CNN citing multiple officials.

Biden administration officials are currently in talks with their Saudi counterparts about a potential meeting between the two leaders while Biden is overseas next month, officials told CNN. The meeting would come after months of turbulent relations and multiple attempts at rapprochement by the White House.

“You should count on something like this happening, it just comes down to when, not if,” a former U.S. official familiar with the discussions said.

“Because of our multiple shared national security interests, [a meeting] is a good thing,” said the former

U.S. official.

Meanwhile, leading human rights groups have urged the United Nations to scrutinize Saudi Arabia’s treatment of advocates ahead of a meeting of the UN Human Rights Council (OHCHR) next month.

Experts from Amnesty International, the Persian Gulf Center for Human Rights and Human Rights Watch said at an event on Wednesday that the OHCHR needed to address a number of key concerns at the summit - including women’s rights, arbitrary detentions, the death penalty, and the conditions of migrant workers.

“It is really important that diplomats keep Saudi Arabia on its agenda and establish regular monitoring and reporting on its human rights situation,” said Rothna Begum, senior women’s rights researcher at Human Rights Watch.

“Without this, we will only hear what the Saudi authorities want us to hear on their so-called reforms.”

Speaking at the event, the rights groups said the UN must pressure the kingdom to allow international observers the ability to monitor the situation on the ground and the alleged reforms taking place in the country.

Iraq Bids to Control Oil Revenues With Contract Switch

BAGHDAD (Reuters) – Iraq has made a fresh attempt to control revenue from the Kurdistan region by asking oil and gas firms operating there to sign new contracts with state-owned marketer, SOMO, rather than the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).

Oil Minister, Ihsan Ismael, said Iraq’s Oil Ministry would start implementing a February federal court ruling that deemed the legal foundations of the Kurdistan region’s oil and gas sector unconstitutional.

A letter seen by Reuters shows that the Oil Ministry appointed international law firm, Cleary Gottlieb Steen and Hamilton, to approach some oil and gas firms operating in the Kurdistan region to “initiate discussions to bring their operations into line with applicable Iraqi law.”

Implementing the court decision “will require changes to the contractual regime” for the compa-

nies, the letter added. Other firms received a letter directly from the Oil Minister, one source said.

The KRG has repeatedly rejected the federal court ruling.

The letters mark the first direct contact between the Ministry and oil firms operating in the Kurdistan region.

Baghdad’s persistent attempts to implement the ruling have the capacity to worsen already fraught tensions with Erbil.

Iraq’s state-owned North Oil (NOC) claimed, on Saturday, that KRG forces occupied some oil wells in Kirkuk.

Iraq has struggled to attract major fresh investments into its federal energy industry since signing a flurry of post U.S.-invasion deals over a decade ago.

The Iraqi government has cut oil output targets repeatedly as international oil companies that signed those initial deals leave due to poor returns.