

Jailbreakers Sentenced to 5 Years

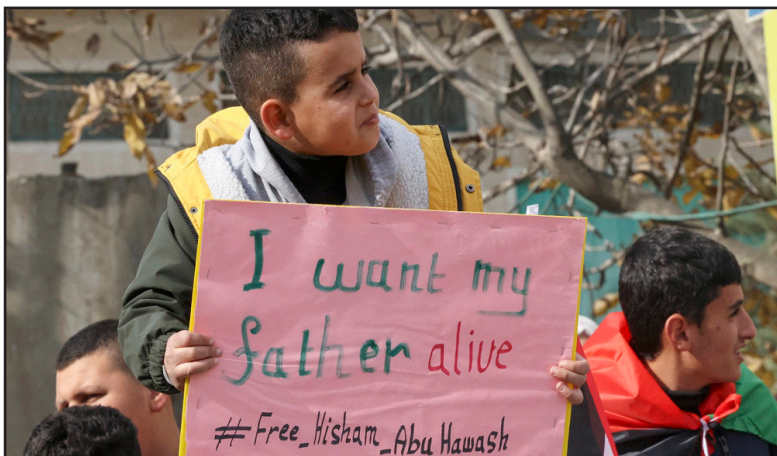
Palestinian Inmates Continue Boycotting Zionist Courts

WEST BANK (AP) – A Zionist court on Sunday sentenced six Palestinian inmates to five years in prison for tunneling out of their cell last year and escaping from a high-security facility in the biggest prison break of its kind in decades.

The jailbreak sparked a massive manhunt in the country’s north and the occupied West Bank in search for the men, who were members of Palestinian resistance movements. They were recaptured days later.

The bold escape dominated newscasts, sparked heavy criticism of the occupying regime’s prison service and prompted the government to launch an inquiry. According to various reports, the men dug a tunnel through the floor of their shared cell undetected over several months and managed to slip past a sleeping prison guard after emerging through a hole outside the facility.

The judge ruled that the sentence took into account the fact that the prison break paralyzed the regime for days, the costs it took to recapture the inmates and the harm to public security caused by having prisoners under life sentence



Supporters and relatives of hunger-striking Palestinian prisoner Hisham Abu Hawwash rally in his village of Dura, west of Al-Khalil, in the occupied West Bank, on January 2, 2022.

and convicted of serious crimes escape.

The five-year sentence will be added to the prison terms the prisoners were already serving. Five other inmates charged with assisting the men were sentenced to an additional four years.

Five of the escapees are from the Islamic Jihad resistance movement, with four of them serving life sentences. The sixth, Zakaria

Zubeidi, is a member of the Fatah group of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. Zubeidi was a resistance leader during the second Palestinian uprising in the early 2000s and well known in the occupied territories.

Palestinians consider prisoners held by the occupied territories to be heroes of their national cause and many on social media celebrated the escape and held dem-

onstrations in support of the prisoners.

Meanwhile, Palestinian prisoners keep boycotting the Zionist regime’s military courts on the 142nd consecutive day of their protest action against the so-called policy of administrative detention.

Nearly 500 inmates have been refusing to show up for their military court hearings since the beginning of the year, Palestine’s official Wafa news agency reported on Sunday.

The boycott targets hearings for the renewal of administrative detention orders as well as appeal hearings and later sessions at the regime’s so-called ‘supreme court.’ The move is the protraction of longstanding efforts to end the unjust detention practiced against the Palestinians.

The detainees say the courts are a “barbaric, racist tool that has consumed hundreds of years from the lives of our people under the banner of administrative detention, through nominal and fictitious courts – the results of which are predetermined by the military commander of the region.”

Drones Target Turkish Forces in Northern Iraq

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – Drone attacks on a Turkish military base in Iraq’s northern province of Nineveh have left three people dead, a report says.

The causalities include two Turkish soldiers and a civilian contractor with the Turkish military who were all killed when Zilkan base in Nineveh’s Bashiqa came under attacks, Sabereen News reported.

At least six combat drones were involved in the incident which took place early on Sunday, added the Telegram news channel that is associated with Iraqi anti-terror Popular Mobilization

Units, better known by the Arabic name Hashd al-Sha’abi.

An Iraqi resistance group calling itself Ahrar al-Sinjar (Freemen of Sinjar) claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it targeted the base with unmanned aircraft.

Nineveh houses Turkish forces involved in the ongoing military operations against purported positions of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) militant group in the semi-autonomous Kurdistan region.

Turkey has been conducting its military operations without the authorization of the Baghdad government, the spokesman

for the Iraqi Foreign Ministry, Ahmed al-Sahaf, told Sabereen News on April 24.

Sahaf said there was a pre-2003 agreement between Ankara and Baghdad that temporarily permitted Turkish military forces, under certain circumstances, to cross five kilometers over the border in pursuit of PKK militants for a limited number of days in coordination with the Iraqi government.

However, in 2009, the Iraqi parliament “canceled” all agreements that permitted Turkish troops to enter the country, he noted.

Early last month, Turkey an-

nounced its latest cross-border incursion into Iraq.

The Iraqi government summoned the Turkish ambassador, Ali Riza Guney, and handed him a “strongly worded” protest note over the offensive, and called the operation a blatant violation of its sovereignty.

Hassan al-Adari, the head of the Sadrist bloc, which has the largest number of seats in the Iraqi parliament, has said that Iraq must take the matter of Turkey’s repeated attacks to the United Nations Security Council and the Arab League to establish a “unified stance” on the matter.

Thousands Protest Turkish Opposition Politician’s Conviction

ISTANBUL (Reuters/Anadolu) – Thousands have gathered for a rally in Istanbul to protest the conviction of leading Turkish opposition politician Canan Kaftancıoğlu for insulting the president and the state.

Demonstrators in the central district of Maltepe chanted on Saturday songs and waved the opposition and national flags.

Kaftancıoğlu, who was sentenced to just under five years in jail, heads Republican People’s Party’s (CHP) Istanbul branch and is one of the strongest voices in it.

In 2019, she played a significant role in municipal elections in the city that saw the CHP take over the mayoralty, which had been held by

President Tayyip Erdogan’s AK Party and its predecessors for the last 25 years.

Turkey’s judicial independence has been in the spotlight in recent years, notably since a crackdown on the judiciary and other state bodies after an abortive 2016 coup and a switch to an executive presidency last year.

The country’s top court upheld three convictions in a ruling made public earlier this month, but reduced the prison term to four years, 11 months and 20 days.

Under Turkish law, sentences of under five years are suspended, and two legal experts told Reuters that Kaftancıoğlu would not be

jailed.

U.S. Envoy Summoned

Meanwhile, Turkey’s foreign ministry has summoned the U.S. ambassador in Ankara to protest the U.S. warning of its citizens residing in Turkey.

The U.S. ambassador to Ankara was summoned to the Turkish Foreign Ministry over a warning to U.S. citizens in Turkey about attending a political rally that referred to police crowd control methods, the AP has quoted the Turkish local media as saying on Sunday.

The embassy posted a message

on its website on May 18 ahead of an Istanbul rally for the opposition People’s Republican Party, or CHP, on Saturday evening.

According to AP, the Turkish Anadolu news agency, citing unnamed ministry sources, reported that Ambassador Jeffry Flake was summoned so the Turkish government could express its “discomfort” over “the unfounded allegations” in the U.S. warning.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry on Sunday issued its own warning to Turkish citizens in the U.S. It said, in the past, live ammunition, electroshocks, tear gas and “violent acts” had been employed by U.S. police to quell demonstrations.

Ukraine ...

(Continued From Page One)

and talk about limiting your missile (military) power.”

Additionally, Russia’s constant bombardment of Ukraine has sidelined its Air Force’s weak display of airpower. Despite its poor performance in the skies, Russia’s missile barrage has caused large-scale destruction and setbacks for the Ukrainian army.

The logic that a country cannot depend on assurances from foreign powers to guarantee its security has molded Iran’s tactical priorities, 19Forty-Five said.

The ongoing Vienna talks have been fruitless at best, and the Islamic Republic views these negotiations as precarious and unreliable anyway, the website said. In the eyes of Iran’s officials, the country’s growing and advancing missile power is the only way to achieve effective deterrence it added.

Terrorists...

(Continued From Page One)

of the network were arrested by the IRGC members and the intelligence ministry, without giving further details.

Last month, the intelligence ministry arrested three agents working for the Mossad spy agency in the country’s southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan.

The ministry said in a statement at the time that the spies were involved in disseminating classified information and documents but gave no details about their nationalities.

Protests...

(Continued From Page One)

President Yoon Suk-yeol said following their summit that they agreed to consider expanding the scope and scale of their joint military exercises.

U.S., Japan, Australia, and India will unveil a maritime initiative at the Quad summit in Tokyo to curb illegal fishing in the Indo-Pacific, the Financial Times reported on Saturday, citing a U.S. official.

They said that the maritime initiative will use satellite technology to create a tracking system for illegal fishing from the Indian Ocean to the South Pacific by connecting surveillance centers in Singapore and India.

Biden is visiting Japan to attend the meeting of the Quad group of countries - Australia, India, Japan and the United States in Tokyo- which have increased cooperation with the aim of confronting China.

According to the Financial Times report, the maritime initiative will enable these countries to monitor illegal fishing even when the boats have turned off the transponders which are typically used to track vessels.

The U.S.-Indo Pacific coordinator Kurt Campbell had said earlier this month that United States will soon announce plans to battle illegal fishing in the U.S.

Russia...

(Continued From Page One)

of Defense said Russia’s only operational company of BMP-T Terminator tank support vehicles, which are designed to protect main battle tanks, “has likely been deployed to the Sievierodonetsk axis of the Donbas offensive.”

It said, however, with a maximum of 10 of the vehicles deployed, “they are unlikely to have a significant impact on the campaign.”

In a general staff morning report, Russia also said that it was preparing to resume its offensive toward Slovyansk, a city in Donetsk province that is critical to Russia’s objective of capturing all of eastern Ukraine and saw fierce fighting last month after Moscow’s troops backed off from Kyiv.

With Russia claiming to have taken prisoner nearly 2,500 Ukrainian fighters from the besieged Mariupol steel plant, concerns grew about their fate and the future facing the remaining residents of the city, now in ruins with more than 20,000 residents feared dead.

The Russian Defense Ministry on Saturday released video of its troops taking into custody Serhiy Volynskyy, the commander of the Ukrainian Navy’s 36th Special Marine Brigade, which was one of the main forces defending the steel plant.

The Azovstal steel plant for weeks was the last defense holdout in Mariupol and became a symbol of Ukrainian tenacity. Its seizure gave Russian President Vladimir Putin a badly wanted victory in the war he began nearly three months ago.

Denis Pushilin, the pro-Kremlin head of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic, vowed the Ukrainian fighters from the plant would face tribunals. He said the fighters included some foreign nationals, though he did not provide details.

Russia on Saturday released a list of 963 Americans it said were banned from entering the country, a punctuation of previously announced moves against President Joe Biden and other senior U.S. officials.

The country said it would continue to retaliate against what it called hostile U.S. actions.

The lifetime bans imposed on the Americans, including Secretary of State Antony Blinken, U.S. Senate majority leader Chuck Schumer, Pentagon chief Lloyd Austin and CIA head William Burns, are largely symbolic.

They came on the same day Biden signed a support package providing nearly \$40 billion in aid for Ukraine.

But the latest action by Russia forms part of a downward spiral in the country’s relations with the West since the Ukraine war, which prompted Washington and allies to impose drastic sanctions on Moscow and step up arms supplies to Ukraine’s military.

Notably, Donald Trump, who as president from 2017 to 2021 sought a close relationship with Russian leader Vladimir Putin, is absent from the ban list.

Last month, Russia’s foreign ministry banned Boris Johnson, Liz Truss, Ben Wallace and 10 other British government members from entering the country.

The ministry said the decision was made “in view of the unprecedented hostile action by the UK government”.

Iraqi Court Postpones Smuggling Case Against Briton, German

BAGHDAD (AP) – An Iraqi court Sunday postponed the trial of two European tourists charged with antiquities smuggling after their lawyers argued more information was needed about the ancient objects found in their possession.

The defense team for German national Volker Waldman filed a motion in court saying there was insufficient information about the value of the pieces Iraqi officials found on him. He was charged alongside Jim Fitton, 66, a retired British geologist.

Baghdad’s felony court postponed the case until June 6.

Furat Kubba, defense lawyer for Waldman, said he launched the motion partly to

seek more information about the historical significance of the pieces found in his client’s possession.

A government technical team concluded the items — 10 pieces found in Fitton’s possession and two in Waldman’s — could be classified as archaeological pieces because they dated back more than 200 years. The objects were collected at Eridu, an ancient Mesopotamian city in southern Iraq.

Waldman’s defense team has said the German tourist had been carrying the pieces for Fitton but that he did not pick them up from the site. Both men are charged with smuggling based on the country’s an-

tiquities laws, and could potentially face the death penalty. However, officials have said that was only a remote possibility.

Kubba said they would seek to have Waldman and Fitton tried separately. Both men said they were unaware of the Iraqi antiquities smuggling law or that there would be penalties for picking up or attempting to leave the country with the items.

Fitton and Waldman were arrested on March 20 at Baghdad International Airport when airport security discovered the items in their luggage. They had been part of a tourism expedition across the country’s ancient sites.