

Survey: Most Zionists Fear Seeing Palestine Flag



A Palestinian woman at a protest in Gaza on 30 March 2019.

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – A new survey conducted by a rights group has revealed that most Zionists fear the sight of the Palestine flag, Quds Press has reported.

The survey conducted by Amnesty International showed that half of the Palestinians in the occupied territories believe that raising the flag of Palestine is part of their national identity. Indeed, 35 percent of respondents said that raising the flag is a protest against discrimination in the occupied territories.

Predictably, 52 percent of Zionists in the occupied lands believe that raising the Palestinian flag symbolizes that there is no recognition of the Zionist regime, while 14.5 percent believe that it symbolizes support for resistance against the occupying regime.

Conversely, the survey found that 95.3 percent of Zionists believe that raising the flag of the occupying regime is an expression of their so-called 'national identity'. Just over 30 percent of the Palestinian respondents believe that rais-

ing the regime's flag means ignoring the state of Palestine and its right to exist, with 45 percent linking the regime's flag to "negative merits and intentions".

72.3 percent of Zionists are scared of the Palestine flag.

In another development, Zionist troops wounded 100 Palestinian protesters on Tuesday in a crackdown on protests against land grabs in Beit Dajan village, east of Nablus in the occupied West Bank, the Palestinian Red Crescent (PRC) has revealed.

According to Ahmad Jibril, at the PRC's Emergency Department in Nablus, 22 Palestinians were treated for injuries caused by rubber-coated steel bullets, and 75 others were treated for tear gas inhalation.

Palestinians across the territories occupied since 1967 and the rest of historic Palestine have been rising up against decades of Zionist settler-colonialism and apartheid, said Wafa news agency.

The occupation troops were reported to have used deadly violence to disperse the protest rally against the confiscation of Palestinian-owned land to make room for another illegal colonial settlement.

In the past few weeks, Wafa pointed out, eight Palestinians from Beit Dajan have been killed and more than 620 others have been injured while trying to remove the colonial-settler outpost built on Mount Sabih near the village. All of Zionist settlement and outposts are illegal under international law.

Saudi Arabia Removes Barriers Around Ka'bah

RIYADH (MEMO) – The authorities in Saudi Arabia have removed the protective barriers cordoning off the holy Ka'bah in the Grand Mosque in Makkah after two and a half years of restrictive measures aimed at enforcing social distancing among pilgrims to reduce the spread of Covid-19.

The announcement was made on Tuesday by Sheikh Abdulrahman al-Sudais, who leads the General Presidency for the Affairs of the Two Holy Mosques. "The presidency is working

with all sectors operating at the Grand Mosque to welcome pilgrims and to provide them with all services based on the leadership's aspirations," explained al-Sudais. The move comes at a busy time in the kingdom as many Muslim pilgrims travel to perform the Umrah (Minor Pilgrimage) during school holidays.

The barriers were placed around the Ka'bah on 1 July 2020 and prevented pilgrims from touching the Ka'bah or kissing the Black Stone, as is

traditional. The marble area around the Ka'bah, which pilgrims circle seven times as part of the pilgrimage rites, was also sterilized.

In March this year, the kingdom lifted most coronavirus restrictions, including social distancing at the Grand Mosque in Makkah and the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, although face masks still had to be worn. On 13 June, though, such precautionary and preventative measures were lifted. One million pilgrims convened for this

year's Hajj which took place last month, the largest number of pilgrims since before the pandemic.

Last month, al-Sudais announced that the new cover of the Ka'bah, known as the Kiswah, would be installed at the dawn of the new Islamic year which fell last Saturday in the kingdom. Traditionally, the new cover would adorn the Ka'bah on the morning of 9 Dhul Hijjah, after Hajj pilgrims leave to go to the Plain of Arafat.

Hackers Shut Down Websites of Major Zionist Regime Ports

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – A group of pro-Palestinian hackers, apparently from Bangladesh, have shut down the websites of two major ports in the Israeli-occupied territories, amid rising cyber operations targeting the regime's companies and facilities.

The group, named Mysterious Team Bangladesh, brought down the websites of the Port of Eilat and the Port of Ashdod, the Hebrew-language Yedioth Ahronot daily newspaper reported.

It remains unclear whether the hackers managed to steal any sensitive information or personal data.

Last week, social media activists said various Israeli websites were offline due to a widespread cyber attack that was perpetrated by an Iraqi hacker group calling itself "ALtahreah Team."

Among the affected sites were the Lifters website, the Nadlan World website, and the website of the Liam Group.

Iraqi hackers posted a picture of Iran's top anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, who was assassinated along with his Iraqi comrade Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), in a U.S. drone strike authorized by

former president Donald Trump near Baghdad International Airport on January 3, 2020.

They also placed a tab in order to play the official anthem of the Iraqi PMU, better known by the Arabic word Hashd al-Sha'abi, on the defaced Zionist websites.

Sabereen News, a Telegram news channel associated with Hashd al-Sha'abi, reported on July 11 that ALtahreah Team had managed to break into the Tel Aviv municipality website and take it down, a week after a similar cyber attack on NTA Metropolitan Mass Transit System Ltd., which is responsible for the design and construction of a mass transit system in the coastal city.

"Does not work; it's suspended by order of General Qassem Soleimani," read the message posted on the Tel Aviv Municipality website at the time it was hacked.

In a similar incident, the regime's NTA Metropolitan Mass Transit System Ltd, the company building the light rail network for the Tel Aviv area, said last month that its website was temporarily disrupted by a foreign cyberattack.

Two Years on

UN Experts, NGOs Urge Probe Into Beirut Blast

GENEVA (AFP) – United Nations experts and top NGOs urged the UN Human Rights Council on Wednesday to launch an investigation into the deadly Beirut port blast, on the eve of its two-year anniversary.

The August 4, 2020 mega-blast killed more than 200 people and destroyed swathes of the Lebanese capital, after a stockpile of haphazardly stored ammonium nitrate fertilizer caught fire at the port.

Relatives of blast victims have pressed for justice and accountability for two years.

"This tragedy marked one of the largest non-nuclear blasts in recent memory, yet the

world has done nothing to find out why it happened," the six UN experts said.

"On the second anniversary of the blast, we are disheartened that people in Lebanon still await justice, and we call for an international investigation to be initiated without delay."

The blast shocked a population already reeling from an unprecedented economic crisis, and is widely blamed on the negligence and mismanagement of Lebanese authorities.

The lead investigator, Tarek Bitar, who was chasing after some of Lebanon's top brass, has been barred from proceeding after poli-

ticians he summoned for questioning filed a series of lawsuits against him.

The next Human Rights Council session starts on September 13.

The Council "should pass a resolution... to create an impartial fact-finding mission into the Beirut port explosion," said 11 local and international NGOs.

In Rome, Pope Francis extended his sympathy to Lebanese ahead of the blast anniversary.

"I hope that Lebanon, with the help of the international community, will continue on the path of rebirth," he said.

Specter ...

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drills in the area indicating Chinese forces were in the north, southwest and southeast of Taiwan to practice sea assaults and land strikes, aerial combat and "joint containment."

Also on Wednesday, Taiwan's military sought to hold the line, while signaling that it did not wish to escalate the situation. Calling the drills a blockade, it said the exercises had intruded into Taiwan's territorial waters and endangered international waterways and regional security.

"We resolutely defend national sovereignty and will counter any aggression against national sovereignty," said Maj. Gen. Sun Li-fang, a spokesman for Taiwan's defense ministry, in response to the drills.

"We will strengthen our vigilance with a rational attitude which won't escalate conflicts," he added.

China on Wednesday also imposed curbs on the import of fruit and fish from Taiwan.

Its customs authorities said it would suspend some citrus fruit imports over alleged "repeated" detection of excessive pesticide residue.

It also banned the import of certain fish from the island, pointing to the discovery of the coronavirus on packages.

These bans came a day after Taipei's Council of Agriculture said China had cited regulatory breaches in suspending the import of Taiwanese goods including fishery products, tea and honey.

It is not the first time Beijing has aimed at Taiwan's agricultural products -- it banned pineapple imports in March 2021, citing the discovery of pests. However, the move was widely seen as politically driven.

The moves are part of a "common pattern for Beijing", said Even Pay, an agriculture analyst at consultancy Trivium China.

More disruptions of agricultural and food trade can be expected in the coming days, she added.

The Chinese commerce ministry said in a separate notice that it would "suspend the export of natural sand to Taiwan" from Wednesday, without providing details.

Natural sand is generally used for producing concrete and asphalt, and most of Taiwan's imported sand and gravel comes from China.

Bans on 'Secessionists'

Beijing has ramped up pressure on Taiwan since President Tsai Ing-wen took office in 2016, as she views the island as a de facto sovereign nation and not part of "one China".

The Chinese State Council's Taiwan Affairs Office said Wednesday that it will punish two Taiwan organizations with close links to "die-hard" secessionists -- the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy and International Cooperation and Development Fund.

Enterprises that have donated to the groups, such as Speedtech Energy and Hyweb Technology, will also be prohibited from working with Chinese firms.

Biden...

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Separately, the State Department approved the possible sale of "Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) System Missiles, THAAD Fire Control and Communication Stations, and related equipment for an estimated cost of \$2.245 billion" to the UAE.

"This proposed sale will support the foreign policy and national security of the United States by helping to improve the security of an important regional partner. The UAE is a vital U.S. partner for political stability and economic progress in the Middle East," the State Department said. "The proposed sale will improve the UAE's ability to meet current and future ballistic missile threats in the region, and reduce dependence on U.S. forces."

Shortly after taking office, Biden announced the U.S. would end its support for Saudi's offensive operations in Ye-

men, "including relevant arms sales." However, the administration has continued to sell arms to the kingdom for what it says are defensive purposes.

Saudi Arabia has historically played an outsized role in foreign military sales for the U.S. military industry. The lead importer of U.S.-made weapons, Saudi Arabia bought 23% of all U.S. weapons sold between 2017 and 2021, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

Climate...

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that come close to international goals, said co-author Tim Lenton, director of the Global Systems Institute at the University of Exeter in England.

There is, Lenton said, "not enough emphasis on how things, the risks, the big risks, could go plausibly badly wrong."

It's like an airplane, Lenton said. It's overwhelmingly likely that it will land safely, but it's only because so much attention was made to calculate the worst case scenario and then figure out how to avoid a crash. It only works if you research what could go badly wrong and that isn't being done enough with climate change, he said.

"The stakes may be higher than we thought," said University of Michigan environment dean Jonathan Overpeck, who wasn't part of the study. He worries that the world "may stumble" upon climate risks it doesn't know about.

When global science organizations look at climate change they tend to just look at what happens in the world: extreme weather, higher temperatures, melting ice sheets, rising seas and plant and animal extinctions. But they aren't factoring enough how these reverberate in human societies and interact with existing problems -- like war, hunger and disease -- study authors said.

"If we don't look at the intersecting risks, we'll be painfully surprised," said University of Washington public health and climate professor Kristie Ebi, a co-author who like Lenton has been part of United Nations global climate assessments.

It was a mistake health professionals made before COVID-19 when assessing possible pandemics, Ebi said. They talked about disease spread, but not lockdowns, supply chain problems and spiraling economies.

Study authors said they worry about societal collapse -- war, famine, economic crises -- linked to climate change more than the physical changes to Earth itself. Outside climate scientists and risk experts were both welcoming and wary of focusing on the worst of the worst, even as many reject climate doom talk.

"I do not believe civilization as we know it will make it out of this century," University of Victoria climate scientist Andrew Weaver, a former British Columbia legislator for the Green Party, said in an email. "Resilient humans will survive, but our societies that have urbanized and are supported by rural agriculture will not."

Climate scientist Zeke Hausfather of the tech company Stripe and Berkeley Earth has criticized climate scientists in the past for using future scenarios of greatly increasing carbon pollution when the world is no longer on those paths to more rapid warming. Yet, he said it does make sense to look at catastrophic scenarios "as long as we are careful not to conflate the worst case with the most likely outcome."

Talking about extinction of humans is not "a very effective communications device," said Brown University climate scientist Kim Cobb. "People tend to immediately say, well, that's just, you know, arm waving or doomsday mongering."

What's happening short of extinction is bad enough, she said.

Co-author Tim Lenton said researching worst case scenarios could find nothing to worry about: "Maybe it's that you can thoroughly rule out a number of these bad scenarios. Well, that's actually really well worth spending your time doing that. Then we should all cheer up a bit."