

Labour Opposes UK's Plan to Move Embassy in Occupied Territories to Al-Quds

LONDON (Dispatches) – The UK's Labour, Liberal Democrat and Scottish National parties have told Middle East Eye they oppose moving the British embassy in the Israeli-occupied territories to Al-Quds, following Prime Minister Liz Truss's controversial pledge to review its current location in Tel Aviv.

Senior Conservatives earlier this week also called for the embassy to be moved to Al-Quds at an event organized by Conservative Friends of Israel (CFI), a pro-Zionist lobby group, at the ruling party's annual conference in Birmingham.

Speaking at the event, Jake Berry, the Conservative Party chairman, pledged his "unwavering commitment... to build strong relationships with Israel and to support it in its fight to ensure that it remains safe and that the capital in Jerusalem (Al-Quds) is the home to our new embassy".

Truss was among a number of ministers who attended the event, telling those present she was a "huge Zionist and huge supporter



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of Israel".

Writing in the CFI's Informed magazine, Truss said: "I understand the importance and sensitivity of the location of the British Embassy in Israel and I am committed to a review to ensure we are operating on the strongest footing within Israel".

But representatives of the three opposition parties told MEE on

Wednesday that they rejected moving the embassy to Al-Quds. The UK, like most countries, currently has its embassy in Tel Aviv because of the disputed status of Al-Quds.

"Our position on this hasn't changed, Labour does not support the move," a spokesperson for the main opposition party said. "We do not want the move to happen and we will oppose it."

Layla Moran, the Liberal Democrat foreign affairs spokesperson, told MEE: "Moving the UK embassy in Israel to Jerusalem would be a provocation. The UK should under no circumstances be taking steps which risk inflaming tensions and damaging the prospects of peace."

Moran, who is the first British MP of Palestinian descent, said she had written to James Cleverly, the foreign secretary, "to make clear that moving the embassy should only come as part of a negotiated settlement between the Zionist regime and Palestine. "This review should accordingly be stopped," she said. "My energy is in stopping this move from happening in the first place."

The Scottish National Party pointed MEE to a column its foreign affairs spokesperson, Alyn Smith, wrote last week, in which he condemned Truss's consultation as "inconsistent with international law and does nothing to help bring about a peaceful solution."

Blast Leaves Casualties Near Mosque in Afghan Capital

KABUL (Anadolu) – At least two people were killed and several others were injured in a blast near a mosque adjacent to the Interior Ministry building in Kabul, Afghanistan's capital, on Wednesday.

According to Abdul Nafi Takor, the ministry's spokesman, the blast occurred in the mosque located outside the ministry complex.

"There is no truth to the claim

that the explosion occurred inside the ministry complex's mosque. It happened outside, where our employees also go to pray," he said in a video statement.

The Emergency NGO in Kabul confirmed that the blast killed two people and injured 20 others.

"After a bomb attack in a mosque at the Interior Ministry, EMERGENCY NGO Surgical Centre has received 20 patients – 2 were

already dead on arrival. This is the 2nd mass casualty the hospital has handled in recent days, and the 23rd of the year so far," the health center stated on Twitter.

On Friday, at least 53 people were killed and 110 were injured in an attack on an educational center in Kabul's Dasht-e-Barchi neighborhood, which is home to the minority Shia Hazara ethnic community.

On Sept. 23, a car bomb exploded outside a mosque in the capital, killing at least seven people and injuring 41 others, including children, as worshippers were leaving after Friday prayers.

In recent months, the Daesh terrorist group has intensified its activity in many parts of the country, posing a threat to the Taliban's security, which regained power in August of last year.

UN Urges Parties in Yemen to 'Heed Calls for Truce Extension'

ADEN (Dispatches) – The UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen has urged the country's warring parties "to commit to extending and expanding the truce."

"I strongly urge the parties to the conflict to heed calls by the UN Secretary-General and his Special Envoy for Yemen for truce extension and expansion to build on the gains achieved over the last six months," David Gressly said in a statement.

"The people of Yemen need peace. Without it, the drivers of the humanitarian crisis would persist, and people would continue to suffer," Gressly added.

"The truce, which first came into effect on 2 April 2022, improved humanitarian access to people in need living in previously hard-to-reach areas, enhanced people's access to services and encouraged the return of internally displaced people to their original communities in areas near the frontlines," he said.

Noting that the truce has also improved the flow of fuel into Yemen's Red Sea ports and led to the opening of Sana'a airport to commercial flights, he said some 26,642 people have been able to travel on commercial flights from the capital Sana'a, many of whom were critically ill and seeking medical treatment abroad.

The spokesman of Secretary-General of the United Nations António Guterres has also expressed disappointment about a lack of agreement between the Saudi-led coalition and Yemen's Ansarullah resistance movement to extend the truce in the war-torn Arab country.

"It is disappointing to see that the two sides did not agree on new proposals to extend the ceasefire," Stephane Dujarric said in a press conference at the UN headquarters in New York. "However, negotiations are still ongoing and UN Special Envoy for Yemen, Hans Grundberg, continues to explore options that are acceptable to both sides."

Dujarric called on both sides to maintain calm, refrain from any provocation or actions that may lead to escalation of violence, interact with each other and focus on completing the negotiations.

"Despite the UN's disappointment with the current situation, we believe that this is not the end of the road and there is still time for the two sides to agree on the continuation of the ceasefire," the UN spokesman underlined.

Back in April, a temporary United Nations-mediated ceasefire was reached between the warring sides in Yemen and was later renewed twice for two-month periods.

The truce, however, expired on Sunday amid the Saudi-led coalition's constant violations of the agreement and its refusal to properly lift a siege that it has been enforcing against Yemen since the beginning of the war.

Mohammed Abdul-Salam, the spokesman of Yemen's Ansarullah resistance movement, censured the aggressor coalition for failing to renew the UN-brokered truce deal and deteriorating the humanitarian crisis in the impoverished Arab country.

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 US and other Western states.

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into the case and an official report is yet to be published.

What started as peaceful protests took a violent turn after unruly protesters fatally attacked policemen and indulged in vandalism against public property in several cities, with fingers being pointed at rabble-rousers in the West.

"With its practical belief in democracy, the Islamic Republic of Iran has always paid heed to peaceful demands of people," said Amir-Abdollahian.

"Foreign meddlers, organized agents, and terrorists, especially in Zahedan and west of Iran, changed the course of people's peaceful protests towards violence, riot, and killing of innocent people as well as police and security forces," he noted, referring to a terrorist attack last Friday in Zahedan, southeast Iran, which killed 19 people and left 20 others injured.

In accordance with its strong laws, Iran is committed to "a precise and fair investigation" into the death of Amini and is pursuing the matter seriously, the top Iranian diplomat informed his Italian counterpart.

For his part, Di Maio said Italy respects the sovereignty and laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran, according to the foreign ministry statement.

Italy also believes that a response to peaceful demands is different from the one to riots and terrorism, he hastened to add.

Iran has blasted the role of foreign countries in orchestrating the deadly riots.

On Sunday, Iran's intelligence ministry said it arrested nine foreign nationals from Germany, Poland, Italy, France, the Netherlands, Sweden, among others for involvement in the deadly riots, along with 256 members of foreign-based anti-Iran terrorist groups.

In a speech on Monday, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said the United States and the occupying regime of Israel and their mercenaries were behind the riots.

"I state it clearly that these developments were planned by America, the Zionist regime, and their acolytes. Their main problem is with a strong and independent Iran and the country's progress," he said during an event in the Iranian capital.

"The Iranian nation proved to be fairly strong during recent events and will bravely come onto the scene wherever necessary in the future."

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can deploy the 300,000 reservists called up in an unpopular partial mobilization two weeks ago.

"This package will provide Ukrainian armed forces with additional capabilities and munitions that it needs to maintain momentum in the east and in the south," said Laura Cooper, the Pentagon's top official for Russia and Ukraine. "We're looking very closely at their consumption rates for ammunition, to make sure that they have what they need for the counteroffensive," she said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has made a series of thinly veiled threats over the use of nuclear weapons in recent weeks in the defense of Russian territory.

Last week, the U.S. unveiled a \$1.1 billion arms package for Ukraine, which included 18 HIMARS launcher systems, accom-

panying munitions, various types of counter-drone systems and radar systems.

That package was funded by the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI) meaning the government has to procure the weapons from industry, rather than taking them from existing stocks.

The latest announcement means the U.S. has provided more than \$16.8 billion in security assistance since the war began.

OPEC... (Continued From Page One)

"Higher oil prices, if driven by sizeable production cuts, would likely irritate the Biden Administration ahead of U.S. mid-term elections," Citi analysts said in a note.

"There could be further political reactions from the U.S., including additional releases of strategic stocks, along with some wildcards including further fostering of a NOPEC bill," Citi said, referring to a U.S. antitrust bill against OPEC.

JPMorgan also said it expected Washington to put in place counter measures by releasing more oil stocks.

OPEC+ sources said the agreed production cuts of 2 million bpd or 2% of global demand would be made from existing baseline figures.

That means the cuts would be less deep because OPEC+ fell about 3.6 million barrels per day short of its output target in August.

Under-production happened because of Western sanctions on countries such as Russia, Venezuela and Iran and output problems with producers such as Nigeria and Angola.

Goldman Sachs analysts said they estimated the real production cuts would therefore amount to 0.4-0.6 million bpd mainly by Persian Gulf OPEC producers such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait.

Analysts from Jefferies said they estimated the real cuts at 0.9 million bpd.

Saudi Arabia and other members of OPEC+ - which groups the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and other producers including Russia - have said they are seeking to prevent volatility rather than to target a particular oil price.

Benchmark Brent crude traded flat at \$92 per barrel on Wednesday, after climbing on Tuesday.

The West has accused Russia of weaponizing energy, creating a crisis in Europe that could trigger gas and power rationing this winter.

Moscow, meanwhile, accuses the West of weaponizing the dollar and financial systems such as SWIFT in retaliation for Russia sending troops into Ukraine in February.

While Saudi Arabia has not condemned Moscow's actions in Ukraine, U.S. officials have said part of the reason Washington wants lower oil prices is to deprive Moscow of oil revenue.

Relations have been strained between Saudi Arabia and the administration of Biden, who travelled to Riyadh this year but failed to secure any firm cooperation commitments on energy.

"The decision is technical, not political," United Arab Emirates Energy Minister Suhail al-Mazroui told reporters ahead of the meeting. "We will not use it as a political organization," he said, adding that concerns about a global recession would be one of the key topics.

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak, who was put on the U.S. special designated nationals sanctions list last week, also travelled to Vienna to participate in meetings. Novak is not under EU sanctions.

Syria Reports 39 Dead in Cholera Outbreak

DAMASCUS (AFP) – Syria's health ministry has recorded 39 deaths from cholera and nearly 600 cases in an outbreak spreading in the war-ravaged country that the United Nations warned is "evolving alarmingly".

A total of 594 cases have been recorded across 11 of its 14 provinces since late last month, the health ministry said late Tuesday.

"The situation is evolving alarmingly in affected governorates and expanding to new areas," the World Health Organization warned Tuesday.

Most of those who have died are in the northern province of Aleppo, and it was not immediately clear if the dead were included in the overall case tally.

It is the first major outbreak of cholera in Syria in over a decade.

The extremely virulent disease is generally contracted from contaminated food or water, and causes diarrhoea and vomiting.

It can spread in residential areas that lack proper sewerage networks or drinking water.

The disease is making its first major comeback since 2009 in Syria, where nearly two-thirds of water treatment plants, half of pumping stations and one-third of water towers have been damaged by more than a decade of foreign-backed war, according to the United Nations.

The source of the latest outbreak is believed to be the Euphrates River which has been contaminated by sewage pollution.

Reduced water flow due to drought, rising temperatures and dams built by Turkey have compounded the pollution problem.

Despite the contamination, over five million of Syria's about 18 million people rely on the Euphrates for their drinking water, according to the UN.

The latest outbreak is especially alarming for overcrowded displacement camps that have little access to clean water and sanitary products.

Cholera can kill within hours if left untreated, according to the WHO, but many of those infected will have no or mild symptoms.

It can be easily treated with oral rehydration solution, but more severe cases may require intravenous fluids and antibiotics, according to the WHO.

Worldwide, the disease affects between 1.3 million and four million people each year, killing between 21,000 and 143,000 people.