

KUWAIT CITY (Arab News) – Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf al-Sabah has been reappointed as Kuwait's prime minister under an Emiri order issued on Wednesday. He has also been tasked with nominating members of the new cabinet, and has been asked to list their names to issue a decree for their appointment, said the Emiri order. The prime minister should implement this order and submit it to the National Assembly, state news agency (KUNA) reported. It is effective as of now and to be published in the official Gazette', it added in the official order.

Palestinian Martyred in Zionist Army Raid Near Nablus

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – Zionist troops fatally shot a Palestinian man near the occupied West Bank city of Nablus on Wednesday during an army raid, according to the Palestinian health ministry.

A large number of Zionist troops, accompanied by army bulldozers, stormed Deir al-Hatab village near Nablus before surrounding a residential building and shooting at people inside.

The building is believed to house a Palestinian fighter who returned fire.

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, a Fatah-affiliated armed group, said its resistance fighters engaged in a firefight with Zionist troops. There was no immediate comment from the occupying regime's army.

The Palestinian health ministry said in a statement that Zionist



Zionist troops stand guard near the settlement of Ofra on the outskirts of the Palestinian city of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank on October 4, 2022.

troops shot dead Alaa Nasser Ahmed Zagal, 21, with a bullet to the head. It was not clear if Zagal was a bystander or a Palestinian fighter.

At least three more Palestinians were wounded, including journalists Mahmoud Faouzi and Louay al-Samhan.

The raid comes amid high alert across the occupied territories, and sweeping restrictions on Palestinians as Zionists observe the holiday of Yom Kippur.

Zionist troops have ramped up their near-daily raid-and-arrest operations across the West Bank in recent months to stamp out a resurgence of Palestinian resistance, particularly in the northern cities of Nablus and Jenin.

More than 165 Palestinians have been killed by the Zionist regime's fire this year, including 51 in the Gaza Strip and at least 110 in the West Bank and East Al-Quds. The death toll in the West Bank is the highest record in a single year since 2015.

At least two Zionist troops have been killed by Palestinian fire since May.

Bahrain Withdraws Candidacy for UN Rights Body After Mounting Criticism



Bahraini opposition calls for boycotting elections.

NEW YORK (Dispatches) – Afghanistan has replaced Bahrain as a candidate in elections to the UN's top human rights body to be held later this month, after critics drew attention to human rights violations in the Persian Gulf kingdom.

A UN website showed that on 26 September Bahrain withdrew its candidacy to run for a three-year seat at the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), without giving details.

The decision to replace Bahrain with Afghanistan came just weeks after a UN expert submitted a report to the UNHRC in which he warned that the Taliban, who returned to power in Afghanistan last year, were clamping down on freedom of expression and denying people their civic and political rights.

A memo circulated among the UNHRC members by the London-based Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD) drew attention to arbitrary detentions as well as reprisals against individuals.

The human rights group also held a series of meetings with UN officials and diplomats in August to urge states not to support Bahrain.

"It's a huge relief to see Bahrain withdrawing after our effective advocacy in Geneva against their candidacy," said Ahmed Alwadaei, advocacy director at BIRD, said.

Last month, an independent human rights organization censured Bahrain over its heavy-handed crackdown against political opponents and pro-democracy campaigners, saying the country has the biggest number of political prisoners among Arab states.

The Bahrain Centre for Human Rights

(BCHR) said in a report that Bahrain, under the ruling Al Khalifah dynasty, has the largest number of imprisoned rights activists, and it is estimated that there are some 4,500 campaigners being held behind bars across the country.

Meanwhile, Bahrain's most prominent Shia cleric repudiated the country's upcoming parliamentary polls, saying the ruling Al Khalifah regime has shut the door on free elections and political reforms in the tiny Persian Gulf Arab kingdom while trying to enslave the nation.

"The [Manama] regime slams the door in the face of any voter or democracy advocate and seeks to place the yoke of slavery on the nation," Grand Ayatollah Sheikh Isa Qassim wrote in a post published on his Twitter page on Monday.

"The regime actively directs every Bahraini citizen to the path of slavery and vassalage. Isn't there anyone who would fear God and sound the alarm on the situation of his homeland and compatriots?" the senior cleric added.

Last month, Bahrain's main opposition group, the al-Wefaq National Islamic Society, called for a boycott of the upcoming parliamentary elections in the country, amid an escalation of political repression and absence of meaningful reforms.

Demonstrations have been held in Bahrain on a regular basis ever since a popular uprising began in mid-February 2011.

The participants demand that the Al Khalifah regime relinquish power and allow a just system representing all Bahrainis to be established.

Manama, however, has gone to great lengths to clamp down on any sign of dissent.

UN Envoy: Iraqi Political Impasse Must Be Resolved Through Dialogue

UNITED NATIONS (Xinhua/Middle East Eye) – UN special envoy for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, has called on Iraqi leaders to engage in dialogue to end political impasses in the country.

"It is time for Iraq's leaders - all of them - to engage in dialogue, collectively define core Iraqi needs and pull the country back from the ledge. In other words, all leaders should assume responsibility and return the spotlight where it must be: on the people of Iraq," the special envoy told the Security Council meeting on the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

The absence of a functioning government in Iraq one year after elections were held is hard to justify, the top UN official in the country said, urging political leaders to put aside their differences for the common good.

Their protracted inaction has sparked protests and counter-protests, culminating in deadly clashes this past August, she said.

"These tragic developments are indisputably the result of the inability of Iraq's political class to cast the die," she added.

"In other words: actors across the spectrum failed to place the national interest first. They left the country in a prolonged impasse, further fueling already simmering anger."

Basra has become the latest front in

Iraq's political crisis as followers of Muqtada al-Sadr have begun pressuring his opponents in the southern Iraqi oil hub to strip them of their economic resources.

Over recent weeks, there have been near-daily armed clashes between Sadrists and fighters of Asaib Ahl al-Haq, one of the most influential armed factions in Iraq and a staunch opponent of the cleric.

The clashes have killed at least four people, three of them Sadrists, local security sources told MEE.

Most attacks are launched by Sadrists, and have targeted the presidential palace complex, Asaib Ahl al-Haq's headquarters and the homes of a number of its commanders.

The largest and most ferocious of these attacks took place at dawn on Tuesday and targeted the headquarters of the Hashd al-Sha'abi popular mobilization forces in the presidential palaces complex, which is located in central Basra.

It was preceded by another attack targeting a group of Asaib leaders in Karmat Ali, north of the city.

Both attacks were carried out with Katyusha rockets, mortars and automatic weapons. The clashes between the two parties, which lasted for several hours in both locations, killed two people, including a Sadrist, local security sources said.

Rights Group Warns of U.S. Collusion in MBS Immunity in Khashoggi Case

RIYADH (Dispatches) – A human rights group warns that Washington may use the "premier" title that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman newly invented for himself as a legal ploy to shield the allied kingdom's de facto ruler from lawsuits filed against him in the U.S., including those surrounding the gruesome murder of dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

In an interview with Arabi 21 media outlet, Raed Jarrar, director of Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN), slammed the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden for adopting a "very weak" position on Khashoggi's murder, despite promises of making the Saudis "pay the price, and make them in fact the pariah that they are."

"We regret the weakness of President Biden's position, which was reflected in the U.S. relationship with most of the authoritarian regimes in the Arab world, especially at the level of relations with Israel, the Egyptian regime or the Saudi regime. These relationships have become cheap and disappointing," he said.

"Biden could not change the course or approach of the previous U.S. administration, but we are putting pressure on the Biden administration internally in Washington, whether as non-governmental organizations or with members of the U.S. Congress, to change these failed policies," the activist said.

Jarrar said the fabricated title of "prime minister" was an attempt by bin Salman to avoid interna-

tional lawsuits against the crown prince, who is widely reported to have ordered the assassination, warning that Washington may choose to work hand in gloves with MBS over his bid to secure immunity in the case.

Jarrar said DAWN would pressure the American government not to recognize the step taken by bin Salman. He underscored that "the legal team of the DAWN organization will explain to the American court that this step should not affect the course of justice at all."

In a royal decree on September 19, Mohammad bin Salman was appointed as prime minister.

The decree did not state the reason behind the appointment. However, experts believe the decision was an attempt to protect him from the potentially-damag-

ing lawsuits related to the assassination of Khashoggi.

In October 2020, two years after Khashoggi's death, DAWN filed a complaint in the U.S. along with Khashoggi's fiancée, Hatice Cengiz, accusing the crown prince of being involved in a conspiracy that led to Khashoggi being kidnapped, bound, drugged, tortured and assassinated.

Khashoggi, who was murdered and dismembered by a Saudi hit squad at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on October 2, 2018, used to be a vocal critic of the Saudi regime and the crown prince.

The CIA concluded in 2018 that MBS had ordered the killing of Khashoggi, contradicting Saudi Arabia's insistence that the crown prince had had no prior knowledge of the plot.

Report Lays Bare IMF's Failure to Revive Jordan's Economy

AMMAN (Middle East Eye) – A recent report by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation says that even though Jordan has begun a corrective program with the International Monetary Fund, the economic situation has reached such lows that it has caused a rise in the national debt and a continuous budgetary deficit.

This has all happened while spending on the social protections given to citizens has been greatly reduced.

The report, Uncovered: The role of the IMF in Shrinking the Social Protection - Case Studies from Tunisia, Jordan and Morocco, argues that the "strengthening of social spending in Jordan requires financial reform based on a long-term reorganization in order to lower expenses".

It also states that Jordanian citizens receive social rewards (free medical services, university scholarships, public service employment) in return for their allegiance to the ruling regime.

Therefore, the state will always cover these social services to guarantee the continued political support of its citizens. Nevertheless, these social services were not provided in an orderly and measured system based on comprehensive social protection.

But these services do not extinguish the ticking timebomb of an army of poor and unemployed citizens, who constitute the core of a social movement the Jordan government is worried could explode into protest like the Arab Spring movements.

According to official statistics from the Higher Housing Council, more than 15.7 percent of the population in Jordan lives under the poverty line.

Laith Alajlouni, an economics researcher who contributed to the Friedrich Ebert report, told Middle East Eye: "Jordan has witnessed during the last 10 years a clear retraction of its economic

status for Jordanians. The percentage of the poor had reached 24 percent in August 2021 according to estimates by the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation.

"Unemployment has also seen a noticeable increase, reaching 22.8 percent at the end of the first quarter of 2022. It reached a high of 25 percent a year earlier in the first quarter of 2021.

"This retraction is a mix of historic, political and other factors all connected with the governmental financial and political administration and are connected to the reforms of the IMF.

"The weakness of the social protection network and a general policy that is built on the rentier economic policies which consecutive governments have applied as an alternative to building up a democratic life, all these caused the government to be weaker in its ability to manage its resources successfully."