

VATICAN (Al Jazeera) – The family of the veteran Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh has been received by Pope Francis at the Vatican, nearly six months after she was shot dead by Zionist troops while covering an army raid in the Jenin refugee camp in the occupied West Bank. The relatives on Wednesday were among a group of guests attending a general audience in Vatican City, a weekly appointment in which the pontiff greets pilgrims. A memorial mass is scheduled to be held at 5pm local time (15:00 GMT) at the Basilica of Saint Mary in Cosmedin in Rome in honor of the slain Palestinian reporter.

Hamas: Zionists Only Understand Language of Force

GAZA STRIP (Dispatches) – A founding member of the Palestinian Hamas resistance movement has condemned the killing of six Palestinians after Zionist troops raided several areas in the northern occupied West Bank city of Nablus, stressing that the occupying regime only understands the language of force.

Khaled Meshaal, the head of Hamas' political bureau abroad, said, "The martyrs of the resistance front have paved the way for the liberation of occupied [Palestinian] lands, and the re-emergence of resistance in the West Bank. Despite the persecution of Palestinians, targeted killings of resistance fighters, cruel siege imposed on the city of Jenin and elsewhere in the West Bank, and mass arrests, the resistance continues to flourish."

He added, "The barbaric crimes of the Zionist regime will never undermine the determination of Palestinian resistance fighters. On the contrary, it shows that the spirit of resistance runs high among all Palestinians."

The senior Hamas official also called on all Palestinians to preserve national unity and tighten the noose around Zionist settlers.



Mourners carry the body of Ibrahim al-Nabulsi, a Palestinian who was killed in a Zionist raid, during a funeral procession in the West Bank city of Nablus.

Meshaal went on to stress the need for turning Jenin, Nablus and other West Bank towns and villages into a strong fortress of resistance against the occupying regime.

"Al-Quds serves as a source of inspiration in order to transform the path of popular uprising (intidafa) and resistance, and secure the complete liberation of occupied lands as well as return of Palestinian refugees to their ancestral homes," he stated.

Early on Tuesday morning, large

numbers of Zionist troops stormed the city of Nablus, located approximately 49 kilometers north of Al-Quds.

According to the Palestinian Health Ministry, six Palestinians were killed by Zionist fire.

Palestinian health and security officials said one of those killed was unarmed.

The Palestinian Health Ministry later reported that another Palestinian youth, Qusay al-Tamimi, was killed during confrontations with

Zionist troops in the village of Nabi Saleh near the city of Ramallah.

Meanwhile, Gaza-based Palestinian resistance groups convened an emergency meeting, and called for national mourning, major strikes and protest rallies across the occupied Palestinian territories in the aftermath of assassination of five Palestinian men killed by Zionist troops during a raid in Nablus.

"We are telling our brethren in Nablus that we will continue to stand on their side. We will hopefully fight within your ranks in the near future. The resistance campaign, which has broken out in the West Bank and across the occupied Palestinian lands, carries this message that the Zionist regime is in decline," Suhail al-Hindi, a member of the Hamas political bureau, said.

"Attempts by the Israeli occupation forces to suffocate the resistance front in Nablus are doomed to failure. We want all residents of the Gaza Strip to stage demonstrations in solidarity with our compatriots in Nablus, and urge young Gazans to respond to the latest Israeli crime properly," Khaled al-Batsh, another top Hamas official, said.

Rights Groups: UK Funding Bahrain Despite Unjustified Death Penalties



Bahraini security forces fire at anti-regime protesters.

MANAMA (Dispatches) – The UK government appears to have breached its own guidelines by providing millions in funding to Bahrain despite a report finding that eight men were sentenced to death in the kingdom without any physical evidence, according to human rights groups.

A report released on October 10 documented the case of eight men currently on death row in the kingdom solely or in large part on confessions that Bahraini authorities forced them to make through torture and ill-treatment.

The report, from the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (Bird) and Human Rights Watch, found that Bahraini prosecutors and courts failed to "genuinely investigate" the men's allegations of torture and ill-treatment or take independent medical evidence seriously before they were sentenced to death.

"Do I think the government has breached its own rules? All the evidence would suggest yes," said Lord Scriven, vice-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Democracy and Human Rights in the Persian Gulf, during a panel discussion in parliament, according to Middle East Eye.

The report implicates three Bahraini institutions which receive funding from the UK's Persian Gulf Strategy Fund, namely Bahrain's Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Interior Ombudsman and the Special Investigation

Unit.

Critics say the UK government, with its support to Bahrain, has violated its own Overseas Security and Justice Assistance guidelines, which say the government should seek written assurances that "anyone found guilty would not face the death penalty" before agreeing to provide support.

The guidelines also say that "the case should automatically be deemed 'High Risk' and FCO Ministers should be consulted."

Meanwhile, Joshua Colangelo-Bryan, a lawyer with the New York-based law firm Dorsey and Whitney and an HRW consultant argued that the charges brought against the eight men were solely based on statements given by people in custody and lacked any physical evidence.

"We don't see fingerprints. We don't see DNA linking a defendant to a crime scene. There are no CCTV videos showing a defendant doing something in particular. We don't have independent eyewitness accounts," he said.

Colangelo-Bryan said all of the men claim that officers beat them using fists, while seven said their genitals were specifically targeted with punches, kicks or electric shocks.

They were also faced with sleep deprivation, threats to harm their relatives, including threats of rape, and officers using a metal bar and chair to suspend them off the ground.

9/11 Families Campaign Against Saudi Arabia's 'Sportswashing' Push

WASGHINGTON (Dispatches) – Family members of those who were killed in the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States have launched a fresh campaign against Saudi Arabia's ongoing efforts at laundering its blood-stained history.

The families' 9/11 Justice advocacy group aired an advertisement in Florida on Tuesday, denouncing LIV Golf, a professional golf tour that is financed by the Public Investment Fund, the sovereign wealth fund of Saudi Arabia.

Former U.S. president Donald

Trump's golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey, hosted a LIV Golf tournament in July.

The 9/11 Justice broadcast the ad in the run-up to LIV Golf's plans to hold another tournament at Trump National Doral Golf Club in Miami, which is set to begin on Friday.

The 9/11 families dismiss the golf tour as Riyadh's bid at "sportswashing" its role in the attacks as well as numerous other atrocities that the kingdom has unleashed on both its own citizens and people living elsewhere across the world.

The advertisement also made mention of Jamal Khashoggi, a dual U.S.-Saudi citizen and Riyadh critic, who was killed and dismembered at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul in 2018.

"The Saudis are using oil profits to fund exhibition golf, hoping to distract you from their policies of oppressing women, murdering journalists, and supporting the 9/11 terrorists," the ad said.

"This is the second LIV tournament hosted by Donald Trump at his golf courses this year, and that is painful and really disap-

pointing," 9/11 Justice's President Brett Eagleson, whose father, Bruce Eagleson, died in the terrorist attacks, said in a statement. "We continue to urge Mr. Trump to meet with us to hear our views."

"The evidence of Saudi government officials' participation in this attack on America could not be clearer."

Fifteen of the 19 hijackers that staged the 9/11 attacks were from Saudi Arabia. The kingdom has, however, long denied any role in the attacks, which killed nearly 3,000 people.

First Phase of Voluntary Return of Syrian Refugees Kicks Off in Lebanon

BEIRUT (Al Manar) – Several buses transported Syrian refugee families to Syria from different areas in Lebanon on Wednesday morning, as part of a government repatriation scheme revived earlier this month, local media reported.

Hundreds of Syrian refugees living in Lebanon returned home on Wednesday, the first day of voluntary repatriations organized by Beirut.

Lugging suitcases, power generators, fridges and even chickens, around 700 Syrians who had agreed to cross over gathered from early morning near the northeastern Masnaa border crossing.

Lebanese authorities say the repatriations are under a revived program run coordinated by the country's General Security agency.

In a press conference held Tues-

day at the General Security headquarters in Beirut, Abbas Ibrahim, the director general of the agency, said that "The return will be voluntary, and we will not force any displaced to return; this is a principle we have established, and we seek to reduce the burden on Lebanon."

"There are currently 2,080,000 Syrian refugees in Lebanon and approximately 540,000 Syrians who have voluntarily returned to their country since the Lebanese General Security started implementing the plan in 2017," Ibrahim said.

He revealed the opening of 17 public security centers in all Lebanese regions in order to organize the voluntary return of the Syrian refugees.

The Lebanese official also stressed that the file of the displaced Syrians is a national one

and that "returning them to their land is a national duty that we must carry out."

Meanwhile, Ibrahim noted that Lebanon has been under pressure by international organizations regarding this issue.

He said international "organizations and others that claim to be humanitarian are trying to impose their will" on Lebanon in the issue. "We will not bow to pressures, because the interest of the Lebanese people comes first. We won't force any refugee to return but we are seeking to alleviate the pressure on Lebanon," Ibrahim added.

That return mechanism which started in 2017 was put on hold with the outbreak of COVID-19. Outgoing Lebanese President Michel Aoun revived it this month and it resumed on Wednesday.

Calls for Changing Food Consumption Habits Mount in Jordan

AMMAN (Xinhua) – Calls mount in Jordan for the public to change their food consumption habits in the light of the global food security challenge.

Around 34 percent of food in Jordan is wasted, so there is a dire need to adjust food consumption habits considering the current global conditions, Agriculture Minister Khaled Huneifat said in a recent statement.

"Sometimes people prepare more food as a gesture of generosity to their guests, but most of the leftovers end up in the trash, especially on the occasions of weddings and celebrations," said Omar Sabri, a sociologist.

"To combat food waste, we need to change our social habits of making large and lavish banquets on many social occasions. There are many families who need that

food," Sabri added.

Some 53 percent of Jordanians are vulnerable to food insecurity, while about 3 percent of Jordanian households are food insecure, according to a UN policy brief published in February.

The brief, entitled "Towards the Implementation of Jordan's Food Security Strategy," pointed out that 55 percent of the food consumed in Jordan, mainly basic foods such as wheat and pulses, is imported.

The country's poverty rate stood at 24.1 percent in June, according to a statement by Jordan's Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation.

"Countries worldwide are currently intensifying efforts to ensure food security and sustain food supply for their citizens. Therefore, wasting one-third of

Jordan's food is a big economic loss," Sarah Hamed, an economic news editor at the Jordan Press Foundation, told Xinhua on Wednesday.

Jordan's Consumer Protection Society also called for reducing food waste, noting Jordan has many charities and food banks that can collect leftovers and distribute them to the needy.

Omar Awwad, president of the Jordan Association for Restaurants and Sweet Shops Owners, confirmed that numerous restaurants and sweets shops have cooperated with charities for food donations.

"More participating restaurants, food shops, and even individuals are welcome to connect with charities to offer food, instead of leaving them to expire and to be discarded," he said.