

KUWAIT CITY (MEMO) – Kuwait has asked Iraq to withdraw three marine vessels violating its territorial waters, Kuwait's official news agency KUNA has reported. According to KUNA, Kuwait's Ambassador to Iraq Tareq Al-Faraj met with Arab Affairs director at the Iraqi Foreign Ministry, Usama al-Refaei, to discuss the issue. Besides asking him to remove the three marine vessels from Kuwait's territorial waters, al-Faraj proposed cooperation with Iraq based on the Khawr Abdullah Agreement, which had been signed between the two countries and stipulated the maritime borders between them.

Minds get tired like bodies. When you feel that your mind is tired, then invigorate it with sober advice.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

Palestinians, EU Condemn Killing of Young Man by Zionist Officer

Turkish Army Targets Syria's Raqqah With Artillery



Syrian President Bashar Assad and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Damascus, Syria, Jan. 7, 2020

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – Syrian sources on Saturday reported that Turkish army forces targeted areas near the Tell Abyad region on the northern outskirts of Raqqah with artillery.

Local sources said that Turkey-affiliated militias targeted two villages near Tell Abyad.

Turkish attacks caused material damage to Syrian citizens, according to the reports.

This is while news sources reported on Friday night that the Turkish army targeted the positions of the armed Kurdish group in northern Syria known as the SDF in the suburbs of Hasakah, Raqqah, and Aleppo.

The development comes as Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has reportedly rebuffed his Russian allies' efforts to arrange a meeting with Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan, citing Turkey's upcoming elections and the presence of Turkish troops on Syrian soil.

Assad believes such a meeting would help Erdogan in Turkey's June elections, allowing him to signal progress on returning some of the 3.6 million Syrian refugees living in Turkey to its neighbor, according to Reuters.

"Why hand Erdogan a victory for free? No rapprochement will happen before the elections," an unnamed source with knowledge of Syria's thinking told Reuters.

Turkey hosts the world's largest refugee population, and public resentment against Syrians has been growing in the country, which is facing a severe economic crisis. Amid the public frustration, Erdogan has promised a "voluntary return" of one million refugees to Syrian territory controlled by Ankara and its allies.

But an unnamed diplomat quoted by Reuters said Syria sees a meeting

with Erdogan as "useless if it does not come with anything concrete, and what they have asked for so far is the full withdrawal of Turkish troops [from Syria]".

Turkey launched its first invasion of Syria in 2016, with the aim of depriving Kurdish militants of a base along its border. Two more military forays followed in 2018 and 2019.

Ankara's footprint in the territory has grown since those incursions.

But rapprochement with Damascus could help Turkey address concerns about Kurdish militants. Turkish officials have suggested in recent days that a new ground offensive into Syria could be imminent.

Last month Erdogan said he was open to resetting relations with Syria.

"There can be no resentment in politics," he said in a television interview over the weekend.

Turkey and Syria's intelligence chiefs have held multiple meetings in Damascus this year with the aim of arranging a potential meeting between the two countries' foreign ministers, but one of the sources quoted by Reuters said Damascus had turned down the meeting.

Assad met Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed (MBZ) in March on his first visit to an Arab state since the foreign-backed war in Syria erupted in 2011.

A source with knowledge of Turkey's thinking told Reuters an Assad-Erdogan meeting could still be possible "in the not too distant future".

"Putin is slowly preparing the path for this," the source said. "It would be the beginning of a major change in Syria and would have very positive effects on Turkey. Russia would benefit too... given it is stretched in many areas."

Iraqi PM Completes Cabinet Formation After Last 2 Ministers Approved

BAGHDAD (Xinhua) – The Iraqi parliament approved the nomination of two more ministers on Saturday, completing Prime Minister Mohammed Shi'a al-Sudani's 23-member cabinet a month after the approval of his government.

A statement by the parliament media office said the lawmakers approved by an absolute majority the nomination of Bangen Rekani as Minister of Construction, Housing, Municipalities and Public Works, and Nizar Mohammed Saeed Amidi as Minister of Environment. Rekani previously served in

the same position in the former Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi's cabinet.

After the approval, the two were sworn in before the parliament, according to the statement.

On Oct. 27, the parliament voted with an absolute majority to grant confidence to 21 ministers out of 23 after al-Sudani presented his lineup for approval. However, the parliament postponed the vote on the ministers of environment and housing because of political disputes between two Kurdish parties.

defenseless young man."

Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammed Ishtaye said the scene of "the criminal execution" in Huwara reflected the organized terrorism practiced by the occupation troops.

In Gaza, Tariq Ezz el-Din, spokesman for the Palestinian Islamic Jihad movement, also condemned the killing.

Hazem Qassem, spokesman for the resistance movement Hamas in Gaza, said, "the Israeli occupation forces' execution of a Palestinian civilian is a heinous crime that would make the Palestinian people more determined to resist the occupation."

The European Union called for conducting an investigation into the killing of Palestinian civilians by the regime in the occupied West Bank.

In a statement on Twitter, the EU said Zionist troops appear to use excessive "lethal force", citing that 10 Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces in the past 72 hours.

"Gravely concerned about the increasing level of violence in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem (Al-Quds)," the statement said.

The EU said 2022 was the "deadliest year since 2006, with 140 Palestinians killed" by Zionist troops in the occupied West Bank and East Al-Quds.



A Zionist trooper shoots a Palestinian man at point-blank range in the occupied West Bank town of Huwara on 2 December 2022.

RAMALLAH (Dispatches) – Palestinians have condemned the killing of a Palestinian young man by a Zionist trooper in the town of Huwara, south of the northern West Bank.

Palestinian eyewitnesses said that the police officer opened fire immediately at point blank at the young man, which was also confirmed by video footage published by Palestinian local media outlets and on social media.

The Palestinian youth was identified as 22-year-old Ammar Me-fleh.

The Palestinian Red Crescent said Zionist troops blocked emergency responders from reaching the victim.

Clashes erupted in Huwara after the killing as Zionist troops shot and injured a Palestinian, and dozens of others were targeted with teargas canisters shot by the occupying regime's troops.

On Friday, Palestinian health ministry said that it was informed by the Palestinian liaison (coordination with the occupying regime) office of the killing of the Palestinian young man in central Huwara.

The Palestinian presidency said in a press statement that what happened in Huwara "is a clear crime that was documented by the street cameras," and "it is a clear execution and a cold-blood killing of a

Lebanon's Mikati Calls for 'Political Will' to Elect New President

BEIRUT (Anadolu/ Reuters) – Lebanon's caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati said Saturday that "political will" is required to end an impasse on the election of a new president.

"What is needed first and foremost is the political will of various political forces and blocs to complete the formation of constitutional institutions by electing a new president as soon as possible," Mikati said at a press conference in Beirut.

He said Lebanon is facing a suffocating crisis reflected in all

aspects of life, calling for making required "reform laws" before moving to a final agreement with the International Monetary Fund to achieve the "promised economic recovery."

On Thursday, Lebanese lawmakers failed for the eighth time to elect a new president.

Former president Michel Aoun left office on Oct. 31 after completing a six-year term, without lawmakers agreeing on a successor.

Since 2019, Lebanon has been facing a crippling economic cri-

sis that, according to the World Bank, is one of the worst of the world has seen in modern times.

The country has been without a fully functioning government since May, with Mikati and his cabinet having limited powers in their current caretaker status.

Lebanon's caretaker government will hold its first session in more than six months next week but the agenda, seen by Reuters, omits any mention of possible steps towards fulfilling reforms required for an IMF deal to ease the country's financial crisis.

The agenda of the Dec. 5 cabinet session contains a number of pressing health, educational and other matters, but nothing to do with decisions related to financial restructuring required for a \$3 billion International Monetary Fund deal.

The government went into caretaker mode after May elections but, more than six months later, politicians have failed to agree on the shape of a new cabinet despite tasking billionaire tycoon Mikati to form one in June.

Saudi Arabia Re-Arrests Shia Cleric Amid Crackdown

RIYADH (Dispatches) – Saudi forces have reportedly re-arrested a distinguished Shia Muslim cleric, as Riyadh presses ahead with its heavy-handed crackdown on members of the religious community.

Social media activists reported that members of the Presidency of State Security detained Sheikh Kadhim al-Amri, a well-known Shia scholar in the holy city of Medina, earlier this week without any charges against him.

The activists added the forces transferred the man, who is the son of the late Sheikh Muhammad al-Amri, to an "unknown place" after his arrest.

Saudi agents had earlier arrested Sheikh Amri in early February.

He is the custodian of a famous mosque in Medina and represents Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, Iraq's most prominent cleric, in

the city. He had been arrested once in 2010 as well.

Last month, Saudi security forces re-arrested senior Shia scholar Sheikh Muhammad al-Abbad in al-'Umran city of al-Ahsa province without a warrant, and took him away to an unknown location.

Sheikh Abbad had been arrested on September 16, 2019. The Supreme Court sentenced him at the time to two and a half years in prison, and slapped a travel ban of the same period against him. He was imprisoned for nearly 3 years before being released last March.

The Shia cleric is known for his strong and courageous stances in defense of citizens' rights, and speaking fearlessly against abuses and misappropriation of organizational power by state authorities.

Saudi Arabia has stepped up politically-motivated arrests, prosecution, and conviction

of peaceful dissident writers and human rights campaigners, in particular in the Eastern Province.

The province has been the scene of peaceful demonstrations since February 2011. Protesters have been demanding reforms, freedom of expression, the release of political prisoners, and an end to economic and religious discrimination against the region.

The protests have met with a heavy-handed crackdown, with regime forces increasing security measures across the province.

Ever since Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman became Saudi Arabia's crown prince and de facto leader in 2017, the kingdom has arrested dozens of activists, bloggers, intellectuals, and others perceived as political opponents, showing almost zero tolerance for dissent even in the face of international condemnations of the crackdown.