

ANKARA (Al Jazeera) – Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan says that the courts would correct any mistakes in an appeal process after a court sentenced the mayor of Istanbul to more than two-and-a-half years in prison on charges of insulting members of the Supreme Electoral Council. Erdogan made his first direct comments after the court on Wednesday sentenced Ekrem Imamoglu, a key opposition politician and a potential challenger to Erdogan, to two years and seven months in prison and handed him a political ban. Imamoglu was prosecuted for insulting public officials in 2019 when he criticized a decision to cancel the first round of municipal elections that he won and became the mayor of Istanbul. His win was seen as a blow to Erdogan and his AK Party.

When you feel afraid or nervous to do a thing then do it because the real harm which you may thus receive is less poignant than its expectation and fear.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

# UN Condemns Zionists for Making 2022 Deadliest Year for Palestinians

NEW YORK (Dispatches) – United Nation experts have condemned the increasing settler attacks and excessive use of force imposed by the Zionist troops against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.

This year alone over 150 Palestinians have been killed in the occupied West Bank, including 33 children, which has resulted in 2022 being the deadliest year for Palestinians since 2005, according to the UN.

“We remind Israel that pending the dismantlement of its unlawful occupation, Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory must be treated as protected persons, not enemies or terrorists,” the experts said in a statement.

They demanded the Zionist regime ensure the protection, security and welfare of the Palestinian people living under its occupation, in accordance with its obligations under international law.

“Armed and masked Israeli settlers are attacking Palestinians in their homes, attacking children



Palestinians gather in the Beit Dajan village of Nablus, to stage a demonstration against the construction of settlements in the region, in West Bank on December 16, 2022.

on their way to school, destroying property and burning olive groves, and terrorizing entire communities with complete impunity,” added the experts.

The statement noted that 2022 is the sixth year of consecutive annual increase in the number of settler attacks in the occupied West Bank.

The warning comes after a 16-year-old girl child was killed by a Zionist sniper this week in Jenin, north of the West Bank.

Jana Zakarnah was found dead on the roof of her home after the sniper targeted her and fatally shot her in the head after Zionist troops from a special unit stormed the neighborhood.

“Disturbing evidence of Israeli forces frequently facilitating, supporting and participating in settler attacks makes it difficult to discern between Israeli settler and regime violence,” said the experts. “The impunity of one is reinforced by the impunity of the other.”

“International human rights law only permits the use of firearms by regime forces against individuals posing an imminent threat to life or serious injury. Use of lethal force as a first rather than a last resort by Israeli forces, against Palestinians who do not present an imminent threat to life or of serious injury, may amount to extrajudicial execution – a violation of the right to life – and willful killing prohibited under the Fourth Geneva Convention and Rome Statute,” the statement added.

There has been a rise in Zionist raids on the West Bank over the past few months, coupled with violence carried out by settlers who have even turned against Zionist troops, at times.

## U.S. Names Assault Ship After Battle That Killed Hundreds of Iraqi Civilians



USS Princeton ship sails past a yacht with spectators during the parade of ships as part of the Fleet Week festivities in San Francisco, California, the United States.

BAGHDAD (Middle East Eye) – The U.S. Navy is naming a future helicopter assault ship the USS Fallujah, after two of the bloodiest battles of the Iraq War which saw heavy civilian and U.S. casualties.

The first battle in and around the Iraqi city was fought in April 2004. The second battle was fought by U.S. and British troops in November 2004.

U.S. forces suffered their heaviest losses of the Iraq war in Fallujah - 27 U.S. troops were killed in the first campaign and 82 died during the second attempt to take full control of the city.

The civilian casualties were staggering. The U.S.-led coalition conducted a devastating bombing campaign of the city before their second attack, forcing some 300,000 civilians to flee.

Between 30,000 and 40,000 civilians remained trapped in the city during the assault, living through what the Red Cross at the

time called a “catastrophic” humanitarian situation.

Immediately after the battle, the Red Cross claimed that some 800 Iraqi civilians were killed in the fighting. It later accused the U.S. of using white phosphorus as a weapon.

To this day, babies born in Fallujah have suffered disproportionately high levels of birth defects, including congenital heart disease, gastroschisis (where the digestive system is found outside the baby’s body), and Spina Bifida.

Although the causes are numerous, one of the most documented reasons for the birth defects has been the lingering impact of uranium in the local environment, a remnant of the U.S. bombardment, as well as previous conflicts, including the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

The U.S. Navy said the name is meant to commemorate the U.S. troops who died in the battle.

## U.S. Senators Call for Sanctions to Pressure Lebanon to Form Gov’t

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – In yet another case of blatant U.S. interference in Lebanon’s domestic affairs, top Republican and Democratic senators have called on the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden to use sanctions to pressure Lebanese lawmakers to form a new government in the crisis-plagued Mediterranean country.

“Instead of simply waiting for political movement and reforms, it is time for the administration to implement a more forward leaning policy,” Republican Senator James Risch and Democratic Senator Robert Menendez said in a letter sent to U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen on Friday.

“We urge the Biden adminis-

tration to use all available leverage, including the threat of sanctions, to ensure that Lebanese lawmakers select a new president and form a government in a timely manner and implement overdue economic reforms,” said the letter, viewed by Middle East Eye.

Accusing the Lebanese lawmakers of “corruption,” Risch and Menendez added, “We strongly urge the administration to use its existing authorities to sanction members of Lebanon’s financial and political elite across the political and sectarian spectrum who are engaging in corruption and undermining the rule of law.”

The Lebanese parliament, which is divided between camps for and against the Hezbollah

resistance movement, failed for the 10th time on Thursday to select a replacement for former President Michel Aoun, whose term expired in October.

Thursday’s vote was attended by 109 lawmakers in the 128-member parliament. Candidate Michel Moawad, who is seen as close to the United States and backed by the Lebanese Forces Party, received 38 votes, well short of the figure needed to win the first round. A candidate needs two-thirds of the vote, or 86 lawmakers, to make it through the first stage. An absolute majority is needed in subsequent rounds. A total of 37 lawmakers cast blank ballots, while the other votes went to other candidates.

Speaker Nabih Berri ended

the session without setting a date for another voting session, which was usually held on a weekly basis over the past nine voting sessions.

Sheikh Mohammad Yazbek, head of the religious council of Hezbollah resistance movement, said last week that the United States is seeking to impose a president on Lebanon who will serve the best interests of Washington and the Zionist regime amid a political stalemate in the crisis-ridden Arab country.

Sheikh Yezbek added that the Lebanese are themselves capable of electing a president and building their country, noting that one should only trust those who are preoccupied with the homeland and its sovereignty.

## Jordan Bans TikTok, Arrests 44 After Deadly Fuel Protests

AMMAN (AFP/Anadolu) – Jordan has arrested dozens of people accused of involvement in protests against rising fuel prices in which a senior police officer was gunned down, the country’s security agency said Saturday.

Colonel Abdul Razzaq Dalabeh, the deputy police chief of Maan province, died of a gunshot to the head in the town of al-Husseiniya on Thursday while confronting what the authorities called “riots”.

“Forty-four people who participated in the riots in a number of regions in the kingdom have been arrested and they will be brought before the courts,” the Public Security Directorate said in a statement.

It said reinforcements had been sent to the provinces, and accused “vandals and outlaws” of being behind violence in Maan, in the country’s south. Jordan’s King Abdullah II warned on Friday that

“anyone who raises a weapon against the state will be dealt with firmly”.

Interior Minister Mazen al-Faraya, also on Friday, said “the security services are working to arrest the perpetrator and bring him to justice as soon as possible”.

Two other policemen were shot and wounded, also in al-Husseiniya, the security directorate said.

Meanwhile, Jordan imposed a temporary ban on popular social media platform TikTok amid violent protests over fuel price hikes.

In a statement, the Public Security Directorate said the widely used but controversial platform was suspended as it was used “for glorifying hate speech and for inciting chaos, attacking law enforcement agencies, and property and blocking roads.”

“The authorities will refer anyone who commits such crimes to justice,” it warned.

The statement said that the TikTok platform was misused by users “to promote videos falsifying current events.”

Cab and truck drivers in several provinces of southern Jordan began strike actions more than a week ago.

They were joined by bus drivers, and merchants who closed their shops on Wednesday to protest higher fuel costs.

Protests broke out this week when demonstrators blocked roads with burning tires and confronted security forces in some areas.

Fuel prices have nearly doubled in Jordan compared with a year earlier, particularly the diesel used by trucks and buses, and kerosene for heating.

The government has proposed relief measures including financial aid for the most-affected families.

## 20 Killed in Clashes Between Yemeni Tribal Fighters

ADEN (Xinhua) – At least 20 people were killed and several others injured in intense clashes between Yemeni tribal fighters in the country’s oil-rich province of Marib, a security official told Xinhua.

Heavy fighting continued between scores of tribal fighters during the past 24 hours, leaving 12 soldiers and eight armed tribesmen killed and several others injured from both sides, the local security official said on condition of anonymity.

The official said that heavy fighting broke out as the tribal fighters launched an attack and attempted to capture an oil company in the eastern part of Marib.

The tribal fighters set up checkpoints and blocked main roads linking between key areas in Marib, he said.

“The clashes are still ongoing sporadically and there are mediation efforts conducted by local social figures to end the internal bloody conflict in Marib,” he added. Local residents said that units

of the forces backed by armored vehicles were deployed heavily in Marib as the tribal fighters continued their escalation despite the tribal mediation.

Forces backed by Saudi Arabia control the strategic oil-rich province of Marib and frequently engage in fighting with the Sana’a-based government forces in various areas near the city.

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 U.S. and other Western states.

The objective was to reinstall the Riyadh-friendly regime of Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi and crush the Ansarullah resistance movement, which has been running state affairs in the absence of a functional government in Yemen.

While the Saudi-led coalition has failed to meet any of its objectives, the war has killed hundreds of thousands of Yemenis and spawned the world’s worst humanitarian crisis.