

ANKARA (Middle East Eye) – The Turkish opposition's joint presidential nominee, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, said he would make it possible for Turkish citizens to visit Europe visa-free just three months after he assumes office. "We will come to power. We will win the presidency. We will solve visa problems," he said during a televised interview on Haberturk TV. "Within three months, our citizens will be able to enter Europe without a visa." Observers in Ankara say visa-free travel to Turkish citizens still would be unlikely for some time, even after Turkey completes all the benchmarks due to the increasing number of Turkish asylum seekers, which amounted to 55,000 applicants last year.

To secure for you fame, credit as well as blessings, the help that you give to men in need, should possess the following attributes: whatever its extent, it should be considered by you as trifling so that it may be granted a high status; it should be given secretly; Allah will manifest it; and it must be given immediately so that it becomes pleasant.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

**U.S. Complicit in War, Siege**

## Yemeni FM Berates Biden for Faking 'Concern'

SANA'A (Dispatches) – Yemen's foreign minister says the United States is bent on whitewashing its complicity in the Saudi-led aggression against the impoverished Arab country by pretending to be concerned about achieving peace there.

Hisham Sharaf was cited by the Yemeni Saba news agency as making the remarks, two days after U.S. President Joe Biden released a statement on the anniversary of the start of an UN-sponsored ceasefire in Yemen and stressed Washington's "support" for all efforts aimed at reaching a comprehensive peace in the war-ravaged country.

Underlining that the U.S. was "trying to evade its responsibilities" as a party responsible for the Saudi-led war and was profiting from it, Sharaf challenged Washington to "prove" its sincerity in wanting peace in Yemen by taking "concrete steps on the ground" and condemning the actions of the Saudi-led coalition.

"The countries that claim to be keen on achieving peace in Yemen



Yemeni Foreign Minister Hisham Sharaf

should be sincere in their intentions by condemning the aggression and siege on Yemen for the ninth year in a row, stopping the supply of weapons and military experts to aggression countries, and putting pressure on the aggression countries," Sharaf said.

The top Yemeni diplomat said Biden's statement and the concern he showed regarding achieving permanent peace in Yemen are "not commensurate with what America is doing in reality by providing cover for the aggression

countries."

"The United States of America is trying with such a statement to evade its responsibilities as a party that participated in the aggression and siege on Yemen, which caused the largest humanitarian crisis in contemporary history, and to present itself as a dove of peace," he added.

Emphasizing Yemen's call for a just peace, Sharaf concluded by expressing Sana'a's readiness to defend the Yemeni people through all legitimate means and the coun-

try's ability to meet the legitimate demands of the Yemeni people.

Omani-hosted talks between the sides in the protracted conflict have been ongoing for the past several months, with the Iran-Saudi rapprochement having increased hopes that an end to the war could be imminent.

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — the closest allies of the U.S. in the region after the Zionist regime — have been waging the war on Yemen since March 2015.

The invasion has been seeking to change Yemen's ruling structure in favor of the impoverished country's former Riyadh- and Washington-friendly rulers and crush the popular Ansarullah resistance movement. The Saudi-led coalition has failed to meet any of its objectives.

The war, which has been enjoying unstinting arms, logistical, and political support on the part of the United States, has killed hundreds of thousands of Yemenis and turned the entire country into the scene of the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

**'We Didn't Get It Right'**

## Biden Review Blames Trump for Chaotic Afghan Withdrawal



Hundreds of people gather near a U.S. Air Force C-17 transport plane at the perimeter of the international airport in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Aug. 16, 2021.

WASHINGTON (Middle East Eye) – U.S. President Joe Biden's administration has blamed his predecessor Donald Trump for Washington's chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan, saying in a summary report that "there were no signs that more time, more funds or more Americans" could have fundamentally changed the trajectory.

The 12-page document made public by the White House said Trump had significantly reduced the amount of U.S. troops in Afghanistan, and that it further "emboldened the Taliban" by considering whether to host them at Camp David.

"President Biden had committed to ending the war in Afghanistan, but when he came into office, he was confronted with difficult realities left to him by the Trump Administration," the report said.

In a press conference, White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby told reporters that Biden inherited a depleted operation in Afghanistan from Trump, which hindered Washington's response.

"Transitions matter. That's the

first lesson learned here. And the incoming administration wasn't afforded much of one," Kirby said.

The report points to "deliberate degradation" by the Trump administration - an accusation that Kirby said refers to the drawdown of U.S. troops, the release of thousands of Taliban prisoners, and the negotiation of the "Doha agreement" to end the war.

The administration of former U.S. President Donald Trump, who had campaigned on a pledge to finish "endless wars", brokered a deal with the Taliban known as the Doha agreement.

Following 17 years of bloody war and various failed attempts at diplomacy, the deal was signed in February 2020 by U.S. special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad and Taliban political chief Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, with former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo serving as a witness.

The Taliban agreed that Afghanistan would not be used by groups like Al-Qaeda, the Daesh in Khorasan (Daesh-K), or other terrorist groups to conduct attacks that "threaten the security of the United States".

## Nearly 100 Faculties Rebuke Columbia University's Pro-Zionist Policy

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – Columbia University's announcement to open a center in Tel Aviv has drawn outrage from nearly 100 faculty members who say the university should reverse the decision because of the new far-right Zionist cabinet, as well as the occupying regime's discrimination against Palestinians.

The plans for the new center, would include programs on climate change, technology and entrepreneurship and would build on several programs the university already has with the Zionist regime.

But in the weeks leading up

to the announcement, Columbia law professor Katherine Franke began to circulate a letter in opposition to the center.

The letter so far has 95 signatures, according to the Columbia Daily Spectator.

"Israel, through formal and informal law, policy, and practice, refuses to abide by international human rights laws and norms both domestically and in its treatment of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories," Franke wrote in the letter.

English professor Mariane Hirsch, an immigrant from Romania who first visited the oc-

cupied territories after the 1967 war, also signed Franke's letter.

"I've been watching with great sorrow and shock some of Israel's policies against Palestinians and against its own Palestinian population," Hirsch told the Columbia Daily Spectator. "The hope that I felt when I first went to Israel as a teenager has dissipated."

"The issue really is that those academic collaborations have become more and more difficult when they exclude a large part of the population and also the neighboring population."

A separate letter in support of

the university's decision has received around 172 signatures, according to The New York Times.

The letter opposing the new center also argued that the Zionist regime would bar certain faculty members based on their identity, politics, and scholarship.

A number of faculty and students at the university have been barred from entering the occupied territories in recent years including Franke, who in 2018 was denied entry after being detained and interrogated at Ben Gurion International Airport for 14 hours over her political positions.

## UN Palestinian Refugee Chief Warns Over Lack of Donors

AMMAN (AP) – The UN agency for Palestinian refugees has warned that it faced growing challenges in running its operations as donors were set to contribute less money this year.

Agency chief Philippe Lazzarini told The Associated Press in an interview that he plans to make a new appeal for donors after the end of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan. He said that if "we are constantly struggling financially, we will become an unreliable partner for the host countries, the communities, for the refugees, but also for our 30,000 staff."

UNRWA was founded in the wake of the creation of the occupation of Palestinian lands in 1948 to serve hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who fled or were forced from their homes. Today, their numbers have grown to some 5.9 million people, most in the Gaza Strip and Israeli-occupied West Bank, as well as neighboring countries in the Middle East. The agency provides social services, education and jobs to many.

Lazzarini said the massive earthquake that devastated the region in early February, as well as an economic meltdown in Lebanon, has added to the plight of many Palestinian refugees.

Although its epicenter was in neighboring Turkey, the earthquake caused damage to Palestinian refugee camps in northern Syria in the provinces of Aleppo and Latakia. According to UNRWA, at least 20 Palestinian refugees were killed in the quake.

"I have to say that the population I met has been deeply, deeply traumatized and terrorized by the earthquake," Lazzarini said about refugee camps in north Syria that he visited in late March during a trip to the war-torn country.

Earlier this year, UNRWA launched an appeal for \$1.6 billion, of which about \$850 million is for the core budget of the organization and about \$750 million for an emergency appeal.

Lazzarini said that the emergency appeal has recently been complemented by an appeal for

\$16 million for the February earthquake that hit Syria and Turkey killing more than 50,000 people including over 6,000 in Syria alone.

Lazzarini said the situation in Lebanon, which is witnessing a historic economic crisis, "is extremely, extremely worrying." Nearly 75 percent of Lebanon's population now live in poverty as the Lebanese currency has lost more than 95 percent of its value, affecting living conditions of the country's 6 million people, including 1 million Syrian refugees and tens of thousands of Palestinians.

"What you encounter in the camp is a lot of desperation, a lot of distress," Lazzarini said of Lebanon's 12 camps, adding that most of the youth that he met have only one dream which is to leave Lebanon.

Lazzarini said he does not have statistics on how many Palestinians have left Lebanon since the economic crisis began in late 2019 "but we have seen the tragedies over the last year, which also involve Palestinian refugees."

## Canada Repatriates 14 Women, Children From Syria Detention Camps

OTTAWA (Reuters) – Canada has announced that it is repatriating four women and 10 children who have been held for at least three years in Syria in Kurdish-controlled detention camps for relatives of Daesh group terrorists.

"Today, 4 Canadian women and 10 Canadian children are being repatriated to Canada. As long as conditions allow, we will continue this work," Global Affairs Canada said in a statement.

"We thank the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria [AANES] for its cooperation in conducting this operation under a difficult security situation," it added, also thanking the U.S. for its assistance in the repatriation.

The Canadian government did not give further details as to which individuals were being repatriated, and it was not clear whether or not the group arriving in Canada included children whose mothers were not given the option to come to the country with their children.

There are at least two dozen Canadians still being held in camps in northeastern Syria after the latest repatriations.

The repatriation could be Canada's biggest so far after Daesh was defeated in 2019. The news was welcomed

by local community groups which have been working and advocating for families inside the Syrian camps.

"We are still waiting for official notice that the plane has landed, bringing four Canadian women home to their families," Alexandra Bain, director of Families Against Violent Extremism (Fave), told Middle East Eye.

Bain noted that there are still many women and children in the camp that Canada has yet to repatriate.

"While there will be relief and joy in four Canadian homes tonight, many other families have been left empty-handed," she said.

"Nineteen Canadian children have been left behind in the camps with 7 of their mothers. Six men, a number of them fathers of some of these children, were left behind in the prisons."

Canada's announcement of the repatriation comes amid the backdrop of an ongoing legal battle to allow all Canadian nationals to return to the country from the camps in Syria.

On 21 January, Canada decided to take back 23 of its citizens - four men, six women, and 13 children - held in the Kurdish-run camps, after a federal court ruled a day earlier that the four men had to be repatriated.