

Zionist Troops Clash With Palestinian Resistance in West Bank

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – Palestinian resistance fighters engaged in a battle with Zionist regime troops in the Jenin region of the occupied West Bank on Wednesday.

The clashes come amidst a recent surge in violence by the occupying regime against Palestinians across the occupied territories. A video circulating online showed fighting and shooting between the Palestinian fighters and Zionist troops who attacked the town of Qabatia in the south of Jenin city. In response, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Battalions, the military wing of the Fatah movement, announced that fierce clashes had taken place between them and Zionist troops in the city of Qabatia.

The occupying regime has made great efforts to control the situa-



A Palestinian resistance fighter stands amid a crowd at a funeral in Jenin, in the occupied West Bank.

tion in the West Bank, particularly in the Jenin camp and Nablus, to arrest “wanted” Palestinian fighters and youths. However, these raids have been met with strong resistance from Palestin-

ian fighters. Israeli analysts have constantly warned about the consequences of the growth of resistance movements in Tel Aviv.

On Tuesday, Zionist troops, accompanied by bulldozers,

stormed the camp, triggering violent confrontations with local residents. The regime’s forces deployed several snipers on the rooftops and surrounded a house in the camp. Additionally, Zionist troops prevented medics from the Palestinian Red Crescent from entering the camp and even opened fire at an ambulance. The Palestinian health ministry said eight Palestinians were wounded during the raid, adding that they were transferred to the hospital after sustaining injuries in the limbs.

The occupying regime has increased attacks on Palestinian towns and cities throughout the occupied territories over the past few months. Dozens of Palestinians have lost their lives, and many others have been arrested as a result of these attacks.

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It was the most concrete attempt yet to bring a pause that it was hoped could be expanded into a longer truce.

It came after U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke separately by phone with the two rivals — the leader of the armed forces, Gen. Abdel Fattah Burhan, and the head of the Rapid Support Forces, Gen. Muhammad Hamdan Dagalo. Egypt, which backs the Sudanese military, and Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which have close ties to the RSF, have also been calling on all sides to stand down.

But fighting continued after the intended start of the truce and through the night. Each side blamed the other for the failure.

Aid agencies and foreigners, including diplomats, have also been trapped in the fighting.

The aid group Doctors Without Borders, or MSF after its French name, said in a tweet that its compound in Nyala in the western Darfur region had been raided by armed men who stole vehicles and office equipment and looted a warehouse storing medical supplies. The International Committee of the Red Cross said its office in Nyala was also looted, with one vehicle taken.

Darfur, which has been the scene of heavy fighting since the weekend, is a stronghold of the RSF, where the force had its origins among the Janjaweed militias, accused of atrocities during the long conflict there.

German media, including the DPA news agency, reported that three A400M transport planes were dispatched to evacuate German citizens from Khartoum, but turned around Wednesday due to security concerns in Khartoum. Japan said it was preparing to send military aircraft to evacuate about 60 Japanese nationals.

In Brussels, Dana Spinant, a spokeswoman for the European Commission, confirmed reports that a senior EU official had been shot and wounded in Sudan. Spinant did not provide details.

Hospitals in Khartoum are running dangerously low on medical supplies, often operating without power and clean water, the ICRC said in a statement. Dozens of health care facilities in Khartoum and around the country have stopped functioning because they are close to clashes, the Sudanese Doctors’ Syndicate said Wednesday. At least nine hospitals were bombed, it said.

A popular uprising four years ago helped depose long-time autocrat Omar al-Bashir. But Burhan and Dagalo joined to carry out a 2021 coup. Both generals have a long history of human rights abuses, and their forces have cracked down on pro-democracy activists.

Under international pressure, Burhan and Dagalo recently agreed to a framework agreement with political parties and pro-democracy groups. But the signing was repeatedly delayed as tensions rose over the integration of the RSF into the armed forces and the future chain of command.

Russia... (Continued From Page One)

energy, agricultural and other sectors. “We fully support the position of our Venezuelan friends,” Lavrov said. “It is their country ... and we are going to support it in any way so that the Venezuelan economy becomes an independent economy from the pressures of the United States and other western actors.”

Officials reviewed some of the hundreds of agreements between both countries covering the financial, energy, agricultural and other sectors.

Gil and Lavrov said their countries are developing an alternative to SWIFT, the system that enables global financial transactions but to which key Russian banks lost access last year. Those banks were cut off as part of economic sanctions imposed on Russia at the start of the war in Ukraine last year.

Russia, along with China, is an unconditional ally of the Venezuelan government. Its support has allowed it to circumvent crippling economic sanctions meant to oust Maduro.

UK... (Continued From Page One)

held at 6.2%, while services inflation - which the BoE views as a proxy for domestic price pressures - held at 6.6%.

“It’s now clear the UK has an inflation problem that is worse and more persistent than in Europe and the U.S.,” said Ed Monk, associate director of personal investing at asset manager Fidelity International.

“Price rises here are proving more difficult to neutralize and the Bank of England will almost certainly add at least one more quarter-point hike to borrowing costs.”

Earlier this month, the BoE’s chief economist, Huw Pill, said the central bank still needed to “see the job through” on monetary policy tightening, though he saw some signs of falling inflation pressures.

Investors now fully price in a quarter-point interest rate rise to 4.25% on May 11 after the BoE’s next meeting - up from an 80% chance on Tuesday - and expect rates to peak at 5% by September, according to futures markets.

High inflation is a problem for Britain’s government as well as the BoE, which forecast in February that inflation would be below 4% by the end of the year. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak promised at the start of 2023 to halve inflation, which would require it to fall to around 5% by the end of the year.

Inflation has also spurred a wave of industrial action in the public sector, most recently among junior doctors who want a 35% pay rise to compensate for more than a decade of pay not keeping up with their preferred inflation gauge.

Last week the International Monetary Fund forecast that inflation would average 6.8% in Britain this year - the highest of any major advanced economy, though not much above the rate of 6.2% forecast for Germany.

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Brick said the attack did not materialize because Israeli military leaders had reached an inevitable conclusion that the strike, if successful, would disrupt the Iranian nuclear program for a period of several months at most, and on the other hand, Iran’s counterstrike would cause great losses and many victims for the occupying regime, so they decided not to go ahead with the attack.

“The operation itself, even if the United States of America participates in it, will result in the disruption of the Iranian nuclear program for several months, no more, but what is more dangerous than that is that we will be attacked by thousands of missiles daily, which will cause absolute destruction, which we did not expect, nor our ancestors expected it,” he said.

Their ability to strike “has increased by hundreds of times from their ability in 2009, and especially, the ability they now enjoy to bomb Israel with long-range missiles,” he added.

Brick said the Iranian missiles are capable of carrying out a strategic attack against Israel and that these missiles have the capability to launch a “fatal military strike against the occupying regime and cause massive damage to the Israeli infrastructure and vital installations, and heavy losses, which will take us many years back.”

Successive Israeli cabinets, he said, have become addicted to issuing “absurd threats”.

“If you make empty threats and do not implement what is stated in them, then in the eyes of others you will turn into a barking dog that doesn’t bite.”

Army... (Continued From Page 2)

Among the major achievements put on display during the parade was Mohajer-6 drone, which is capable of carrying guided bombs and sophisticated surveillance equipment. It has already been used in combat by the Iranian Armed Forces.

Iran’s first wide-body unmanned combat aerial vehicle, Kaman 22, was also unveiled, along with Iranian suicide drones such as Arash, Kian and Karrar, which could be flown from both ground and offshore launchers.

Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, the deputy chief of the Iranian Army for Coordination, said Iran’s armed forces enjoy high level of self-sufficiency in manufacturing military equipment, promising to deliver “good news” in the field of drones in the near future.

“As per the Constitution, the Islamic Republic of Iran’s Army has the mission to defend the territorial integrity, and safeguard and preserve the independence of the country,” Sayyari told the reporters.

Sayyari said the entire set of military equipment that was displayed in the parade on Tuesday is indigenous and features cutting-edge technologies.

He said the army’s self-sufficiency has reached 90%.

At Least... (Continued From Page 2)

province and central Isfahan province. Earlier this month, Iran’s police chief Ahmad Reza Radan stated that road trips witnessed a surge during this year’s New Year holidays compared to previous years, with travelers mostly heading to northern Iran.

He said most road accidents during this period were the result of sleep deprivation and high speed.

Last September, a senior police official said at least 600 people die and more than 20,000 are injured in road accidents every year in the Iranian capital Tehran alone.

Last July, Iran’s state-run Legal Medicine Organization said one person dies in a road accident every half an hour across the country, taking the annual death toll to 17,000.

Turkish Opposition Leader Takes Aim at Bayraktar TB2 Maker

ANKARA (Middle East Eye) – The Turkish opposition’s presidential candidate has angered the company behind Turkey’s famed Bayraktar T20 armed drones, by saying the country’s burgeoning defence industry must be largely controlled by the state and the private sector shouldn’t be permitted to produce weapons alone.

Kemal Kilicdaroglu said defence industry privatization was “a great risk” at an election campaign event where he took questions from students.

“If you only give it to the private sector, let’s say ‘our friend is building an unmanned aircraft’. If you only give it to the private sector, this is a big risk for Turkey,”

he said.

“Why? They might sell it to the Americans tomorrow. Or give it to the Qataris as we have given the tank-pallet factory to the Qataris. Impossible. In all democracies and authoritarian regimes of the world, the defence industry must walk together with the state.”

Kilicdaroglu acknowledged that the local defence industry has made significant progress and said he would continue to support investment in the sector.

“The geography where Turkey is located is in a very critical geopolitical place. Right next to us is the Middle East. The Middle East is a bloodbath,” he said.

“Turkey needs to be strong in the region. Strength also depends on the strength of your defence industry.”

Turkey heads to the polls in presidential and parliamentary elections on 14 May.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is partly running an election campaign based on defence industry products such as the TCG Anadolu light aircraft carrier (nicknamed the world first’s drone carrier) and locally designed aircraft.

Kilicdaroglu’s statements didn’t go down well with the private Turkish drone magnate Baykar, whose chairman of the board is Selcuk Bayraktar, Erdogan’s son-

in-law.

Baykar has made a name for itself worldwide in recent years through its battle-proven armed drones, including the Bayraktar TB2.

It has made \$1.2bn worth of exports, including to Nato countries. The company is now currently developing an unmanned fighter jet called Kizilelma.

Haluk Bayraktar, the general manager of Baykar, reacted negatively to the suggestion that they may sell up and leave Turkey, insisting that would never happen.

“It is very unfortunate to accuse the company of such a thing when it is not in question,” he said in an interview on CNNTurk.

Refugees Claim Gas Flaring Cancer Link in Northern Iraq

ERBIL (Al Jazeera) – Shireen, a 53-year-old Syrian refugee living at the Kawergosk Camp in Erbil, Iraq, started to have cancer symptoms in March 2020.

“In the beginning, I had a lot of pain in my breast, back and arm. I ignored the pain because I thought it could be muscle spasms or an infection,” she said.

The only option for her to seek treatment was the camp’s health centre, where services were limited. She could not leave the camp due to a COVID-19 lockdown, and private clinics were too expensive for a jobless refugee.

It was only in the summer of 2020, when she was finally able to visit a doctor in one of Erbil’s biggest hospitals, that she was diagnosed with breast cancer.

“My nipple was bleeding, and I had to get a biopsy immediately,” she said.

She later underwent surgery and started chemotherapy, which, although completed, she continues to feel pain from.

Shireen is not alone. Nine other women in her block at Kawergosk have been diagnosed with cancer.

Doctors operating in the Kurdish region of northern Iraq and residents believe that flaring – the process of burning off petroleum gas by setting alight any excess in a jet of fire – by a nearby oil refinery may be contributing to a rise in cancer rates. The refinery is operated by KAR Group, Iraq’s largest private-sector energy company. The KAR Group did not respond to a request for comment.

A study published last year in the Asian Pacific Journal of Cancer Prevention (APJCP) found that the number of patients with cancer doubled between 2013 and 2019 in Erbil and

Duhok, also in northern Iraq, correlating with a resumption in production at oil facilities in the region following the end of the conflict with Daesh.

Several residents shared their health records, with diagnoses ranging from respiratory disorders to cancer.

Shireen’s life has changed in the last decade. “We were happier in the village because everything we ate was organic, and our life and mental health were better when we lived there,” she said, referring to the village of Sheir in Qahtaniyah, Syria where she had been living.

Daesh attacked the area in 2013, forcing villagers such as Shireen to flee, leaving their livestock and farmland, to the Iraqi side of the border.

About 1,200 tons of ammunition were dropped on Iraq during the Persian Gulf Wars of 1991 and 2003, making it difficult to distinguish be-

tween cancer cases caused by flaring and those originating from the depleted uranium left by the bombing.

But experts were still very concerned that the 8,000 refugees living at Kawergosk were exposed to dangerous chemicals such as benzene because of the flaring.

“[Benzene] is a potent carcinogen that causes leukaemia,” said Laura Cushing, presidential chair in Health Equity at the Fielding School of Public Health at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). “I do think it is concerning that people are being exposed nearby.”

Pregnant women living near natural gas and oil wells that burned off excess gas through flaring were 50 percent more at risk of premature birth than women with no exposure, a 2020 UCLA study headed by Cushing found.

Egypt Seeks to Shut Down Netflix for ‘Falsifying Facts’

CAIRO (MEMO) – An Egyptian lawyer has filed a case with the Public Prosecutor to have the U.S. streaming platform Netflix shut down in Egypt following the trailer for the Queen Cleopatra mini-series was released, depicting the Macedonian Greek historical figure as a black woman.

According to Egypt Independent, lawyer Mahmoud al-Semary has called for serious legal action to be taken, placing blame on those responsible for the four-part docudrama and the Netflix management for its participation in “this crime”.

The complaint submitted against the streaming giant stated: “Most of what Netflix platform displays do not conform to Islamic and societal values and principles, especially Egyptian ones.”

It added that the trailer, which attracted millions of viewers worldwide, is a distor-

tion of Egyptian history and that the series promotes Afrocentrism, which skews the identity of Egyptians.

“In order to preserve the Egyptian national and cultural identity among Egyptians all over the world there must be pride in the makings of such work,” the statement read.

Queen Cleopatra which is part of Netflix’s “African Queens” series, stars Adele James and is co-produced by U.S. actress and talk show host Jada Pinkett Smith, wife of actor Will Smith.

According to the Netflix website: “Though Cleopatra’s life has been the subject of much debate and lore, the new series hopes to reassess this part of her fascinating story in a brand new way, and also highlight one of Cleopatra’s strongest weapons: her intellect.”

Pinkett was quoted as saying she “really wanted to represent Black women,” adding

that, “We don’t often get to see or hear stories about Black queens.”

Prominent Egyptian archaeologist and former antiquities minister, Dr. Zahi Hawass, has criticized the upcoming series, accusing it of “falsifying facts”.

“This is completely fake. Cleopatra was Greek, meaning that she was blonde, not black.”

“Netflix is trying to stir up confusion to spread false information that the origin of Egyptian civilization is black,” Hawass added, referring to Afrocentrism.

The controversy surrounding the Netflix series comes after U.S. comedian Kevin Hart’s planned show in Egypt was cancelled in February amid public outcry online and calls for his show to be axed over his past Afrocentric views on ancient Egyptian history.