

Turkey 'Neutralizes' More PKK Militants in Iraq

ANKARA (Anadolu) – Turkish security forces "neutralized" six PKK militants in northern Iraq, authorities said on Wednesday. The militants were targeted in Iraq's Gara region, the Turkish National Defense Ministry said in a statement. Turkish authorities use the term "neutralize" to imply the terrorists in question surrendered or were killed or captured. Ankara has been carrying out several offensives in northern Iraq to root out the militants who hide in these areas and plot cross-border attacks on Turkey.

Thought for Today

Vicious pleasures of this world and salvation are like two enemies or two roads running in opposite directions or towards opposite poles, one to the North and the other to the South. Whoever likes to gain the pleasures and pomps of this world will hate austerity in life which is necessary to gain salvation. Reverse will be the attitude of a man desirous of achieving Eternal Bliss.

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## Islamic Jihad Warns Zionists Against Letting Hunger-Striking Palestinian Prisoner Die

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime will pay the price if Palestinian prisoner Khader Adnan dies while in detention, an Islamic Jihad official has warned.

"Israel is fully responsible for the life of the captive Khader Adnan," the movement's national relations head, Khaled al-Batsh, said in a statement.

Al-Batsh urged all parties making efforts to save Adnan's life "to continue pressuring the Israeli occupation to end his [Adnan's] suffering before it is too late."

"The Israeli attempts to circumvent and mislead by presenting fake indictments, through which it seeks to issue an unfair Israeli judicial ruling, constitute an open conspiracy aimed at distancing Adnan from his people, his family, and his relatives," al-Batsh said, stressing that such attempts would "fail with Adnan's steadfastness and will"

Adnan has been on a hunger strike for 74 days in protest against his arbitrary detention by the Zion-



A Palestinian man holds up a poster of Palestinian prisoner Khader Adnan in protest of Adnan's previous 'administrative detention', February 10, 2012.

ist regime. His lawyer said that his strike was "threatening his life."

The 44-year-old, from the town of Arraba, in the northern West Bank district of Jenin, was detained on 5 February and immediately went on hunger strike in protest against his illegal detention.

In an interview last week, his

wife said: "He passes out but not for long periods, he isn't able to keep his balance, his health is in a very bad state and he's struggling to breathe. The doctor has said that – God forbid – he may suffer a stroke at any time."

Adnan has been arrested 12 times by Zionist regime authorities over

the past 20 years for his political and anti-occupation activities and has spent a total of eight years behind bars.

He has been on hunger strike four times

Human rights organizations say the Zionist regime violates all the rights and freedoms granted to prisoners by the Fourth Geneva Convention. They say the so-called administrative detention violates their right to due process since the evidence is withheld from prisoners while they are held for lengthy periods without being charged, tried, or convicted.

Palestinian detainees have continuously resorted to open-ended hunger strikes in an attempt to express outrage at their detention.

Zionist regime authorities keep Palestinian prisoners under deplorable conditions without proper hygienic standards.

Palestinian inmates have also been subject to systematic torture, harassment, and repression.

## UN Says Ready for 'Heartbreaking' Decision to Pull Out of Afghanistan



Afghan women chant and hold signs of protest during a demonstration in Kabul, Afghanistan, March 26, 2022.

UNITED NATIONS (AP) – The United Nations is ready to take the "heartbreaking" decision to pull out of Afghanistan in May if it can't persuade the Taliban to let local women work for the organization, the head of the UN Development Program said.

UN officials are negotiating with the Afghan government in the hope that it will make exceptions to an edict this month barring local women from UN work, UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner told The Associated Press.

"It is fair to say that where we are right now is the entire United Nations system having to take a step back and reevaluating its ability to operate there," Steiner said. "But it's not about negotiating fundamental principles, human rights."

The UNDP said Tuesday that it "reaffirms its long-standing commitment to stay and deliver for the people of Afghanistan." Secretary-General António Guterres' spokesman, Stéphane Dujarric, said that the United Nations continues "to push back on this counterproductive, to say the least, edict by the authorities."

The Taliban have allowed Afghan women to engage in some work, Steiner said, and a UN report released Tuesday shows that the country desperately needs more women working, with its economy flailing.

The Taliban takeover has been accompanied by some very modest signs of economic recovery. There has been

some increase in exports, some exchange rate stabilization and less inflation. But gross domestic product, the sum of all goods and services produced within Afghanistan's borders, is expected to be outstripped by population growth, meaning that per capita income will decline from \$359 in 2022 to \$345 in 2024, the report says.

Some of those economic problems are due to Taliban policies keeping most women out of the workplace, Steiner said. Those economic problems mean more need in the country, but the UN has decided that human rights are non-negotiable and it will reduce its presence in May if the Taliban do not relent.

"I think there is no other way of putting it than heartbreaking," Steiner said in Monday's interview. "I mean, if I were to imagine the UN family not being in Afghanistan today, I have before me these images of millions of young girls, young boys, fathers, mothers, who essentially will not have enough to eat."

A source of faint optimism is the Taliban's allowing women to work in specific circumstances in health, education and some small businesses.

"In one sense, the de facto authorities have enabled the UN to roll out a significant humanitarian and also emergency development assistance set of activities," Steiner said. "But they also continuously are shifting the goalposts, issuing new edicts."

## Report: Zionist Firm NSO's Spyware Again Hacking iPhones

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – A research group says the Zionist regime's NSO Group's spyware was used to launch at least three "zero click" attacks on the iPhones of civil society members last year.

Citizen Lab released its findings on Tuesday into NSO's global reach after its software infected the phones of at least two human rights defenders in Mexico in 2022.

NSO's Pegasus spyware can infiltrate a mobile device either through a text message that users click or more recently through "zero-click attacks".

Those intrusions compromise devices without any action by the user. Messages, chats, phone calls, contacts and emails can be monitored.

The latest identified hacks, Citizen Lab said, targeted phones with iOS 15 and iOS 16 operating software. The Lab shared its findings with Apple, which made security improvements to fix the flaws used by the spyware.

Apple's Lockdown Mode successfully blocked one of the three attacks, the research showed.

NSO Group is a Zionist cyber-surveillance firm regulated by the occupying regime's war ministry. Citizen Lab at the University of Toronto has studied Pegasus extensively.

Citizen Lab said it first found the zero-click exploits in a joint investigation with Mexican NGO Red en Defensa de los Derechos Digitales (Digital Rights Defence Network), or

RD3, after examining phones of Mexican human rights activists.

"The timing of the infections on their devices corresponds to events of importance to the activities of Centro PRODH, and suggests that the Pegasus operator may have been seeking to penetrate and perhaps blunt the impact of Centro PRODH's work relating to human rights violations committed by the Mexican Army," the report said.

Centro PRODH is Mexican legal aid and human rights organization that was investigating a mass kidnapping of dozens of students in Mexico in 2015.

One infected phone belonged to Centro PRODH's director, Jorge Santiago Aguirre Espinosa. Citizen Lab said his phone has been compromised at least

three times since 2016.

According to a report by The Washington Post, Mexico has been "a major NSO customer".

Mexican government agencies signed contracts worth about \$160mn with NSO Group from 2011 to 2018, the Reuters news agency has reported.

NSO officials have repeatedly denied any wrongdoing in selling spyware to governments around the world. Pegasus is intended for use only "against criminals and terrorists", the company said.

An NSO spokesman "declined to say" whether its product was involved in the latest intrusions in Mexico, and he "faulted Citizen Lab for failing to disclose its underlying data", the Post reported.

## Syria, Tunisia Say Resolute on Strengthening Ties

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – Syria and Tunisia have agreed to strengthen cooperation in different sectors as the two countries move to re-establish relations after more than a decade of estrangement.

In a joint statement following a meeting in Tunis, Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad and his Tunisian counterpart Nabil Ammar welcomed the restoration of bilateral ties, the exchange of ambassadors and the reopening of embassies.

The top diplomats also agreed to work towards enhancing cooperation in economic, consular, humanitarian and security fields, and step up the fight against terrorism and organized crimes.

The joint statement also affirmed Tunisia's support for Syria's possible return to the Cairo-based Arab League.

Tunisia, it added, stands in full solidarity with Syria in the face of recurrent Zionist strikes and backs up the Damascus government's legitimate right to take back the Golan Heights occupied

by the occupying regime.

The statement also condemned the Zionist regime's systematic attacks on the Palestinian people, vowing to support the oppressed nation to uphold their inalienable right to an independent state with Al-Quds as its capital.

Since March 2011, Syria has been gripped by a campaign of militancy and destruction sponsored by the U.S. and its allies.

In recent years, however, Syrian government forces, backed by Russia and Iran, have managed to win back control of almost all regions from terrorist groups.

Over the past few months, some Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia, have been normalizing ties with Damascus.

Tunisia cut off diplomatic relations with Syria in 2012. Five years later, it began limited contacts in part to help track more than 3,000 Tunisian militants reportedly fighting in Syria.

In February, Tunisia sent planes of aid to help Syria cope with the aftermath of a devastating

earthquake.

Also on Tuesday, Mekdad met with Tunisian President Kais Saied, with the latter emphasizing his country's keenness to resume normal relations with Syria.

Saied said Tunisia is determined to preserve the "solid and historical ties of brotherhood and cooperation" with Syria, according to a statement released by the Tunisian Presidency.

Mekdad, for his part, described the Tunisian president's decision to revive bilateral relations as "bold and courageous," saying, "We in Syria are very satisfied with the relations that connect our countries."

He further announced that the Syrian embassy in Tunis will be reopened in the coming days, adding that the new Syrian ambassador will soon resume his work in Tunisia.

Prior to his three-day Tunisia trip, Mekdad paid a visit to Algeria, one of the few Arab countries that maintained diplomatic relations during the Syrian conflict.

## Report: Egypt Agreed to Supply Arms to Ukraine After U.S. Talks

CAIRO (Al Jazeera) – Egypt was planning to manufacture rockets for Russia but then suspended that effort and decided to supply ammunition to Ukraine after talks with United States officials, The Washington Post has reported, citing leaked intelligence documents.

The Post had reported last week that Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi secretly planned to produce 40,000 rockets for Russia. But in a new report on Thursday – based on leaked Pentagon files that had been circulating online – the newspaper said Cairo suspended that push in early March.

The Washington Post said Egypt also approved the sale of artillery ammunition to the U.S. "for transfer to Ukraine", calling the shift an "apparent diplomatic win" for President Joe Biden's administration.

Egypt, which enjoys warm ties with Russia despite being a close U.S. ally, has previously denied plans to produce rockets for Russian forces, stressing that it is pursuing a policy of "noninvolvement" in the war on Ukraine. The Biden administration has been

trying to rally allies to Ukraine's aid, warning countries across the world against assisting Russia's efforts or violating Washington's sanctions against Moscow.

Last week, White House national security spokesperson John Kirby said the U.S. has seen "no indication that Egypt is providing lethal weaponry capabilities to Russia", stressing that Cairo remains a "significant security partner" in the region.

Several U.S. officials have visited Egypt this year, including Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, who met with el-Sisi in March.

"He [Austin] provided updates on Russia's unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine, its global economic consequences, and the threat that this conflict poses to the rules-based international order," the Pentagon said after the meeting.

With more than \$1bn in annual aid, Egypt is one of the top recipients of U.S. military assistance in the world.

But Biden has been facing pressure from progressives and rights advocates to place conditions on U.S. aid to Egypt to push el-Sisi's government to improve its human rights record.