

CAIRO (MEMO) – Egypt should release the detained academic Salah Soltan who is at risk of death and ensure he has access to life-saving health care, 51 human rights organizations have said on Wednesday. Soltan was arrested following the 2013 coup then sentenced to life in prison four years later in a mass trial with no due process. Authorities did not give credible evidence for the charges against him. The Islamic scholar is being held in Badr 1 prison, which was recently labeled a “slaughterhouse” by human rights groups because there have been so many suicide attempts due to the poor conditions people are held in.

What do you want to know about a person whose life is leading him towards ultimate death, whose health is the first stage towards illness and whom society has forced out of his retreat?

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

Breaching Ceasefire

Zionists Kill Palestinian in Airstrike, Demolish Houses

AL-QUDS (Dispatches) – The occupying regime’s airstrikes on the Gaza Strip killed a 58-year-old man and wounded five others on Wednesday despite a ceasefire, Palestinian health officials said.

Zionist fighter jets struck targets in Gaza on Tuesday. But after sunrise, the violence seemed to subside as both sides signaled they wanted to avoid a wider conflict.

The exchange erupted when a prominent Palestinian detainee died in the occupying regime’s custody after an 87-day hunger strike. The death of Khader Adnan, a leader of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad resistance group credited with popularizing hunger strikes as an effective form of activism, reverberated across the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, where he is revered as a national hero.

Protests erupted at the occupying regime’s military checkpoints and a general strike shuttered stores across the territories. Palestinians



Smoke billows over the West Bank village of Hares as Zionist troops demolish the home of a Palestinian.

and rights groups have blamed the occupying regime for his death, accusing prison authorities of medical negligence.

Palestinians in Gaza fired 100 reprisal rockets into southern parts of the occupied territories late Tuesday.

The Israeli strikes sent shrap-

nel slicing through the house of 58-year-old Hashil Mubarak in Gaza City, his son Hatem said. As their roof collapsed, shards of metal struck Mubarak’s chest, killing him, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry. Mubarak was rushed to the hospital and could not be resuscitated.

“We were sleeping at home safe and sound when we heard a giant explosion from a missile,” Hatem recalled as mourners filled his neighborhood mosque and took turns bending down to kiss his father’s forehead.

“He was martyred,” he added.

The spike in violence comes at a time of heightened tensions in the occupied West Bank under the occupying regime’s most right-wing cabinet in history. On Wednesday, Zionist troops demolished the family houses of two Palestinians.

The occupying regime defends its decades-old policy of leveling family homes of alleged ‘attackers’ as a deterrent. The practice has long drawn criticism from human rights groups that call it collective punishment, forbidden by international law. Some also question its effectiveness in preventing future attacks, saying such demolitions only exacerbate tensions and fuel hatred in Palestinian communities.

UN Denounces Taliban Attacks on Afghan Media



The UN said Wednesday that the Taliban’s intimidation, threats and attacks on Afghan journalists are unacceptable.

ISLAMABAD (AP) – The Taliban’s intimidation, threats and attacks on Afghan journalists are unacceptable, the UN said Wednesday, as it expressed concern for the future of the country’s media.

Many journalists lost their jobs after the Taliban takeover in August 2021, with media outlets closing over a lack of funds or because staff left the country. Women journalists face additional hardships because of work bans and travel restrictions.

During their previous rule in the late 1990s, the Taliban barred most television, radio and newspapers in the country.

The UN mission in Afghanistan said that although journalists continue to work, they are forced to navigate “unclear and often arbitrary boundaries of reporting against an ever-present threat of repression and closure.”

Its comments coincide with World Press Freedom Day, which is observed May 3.

The UN secretary-general’s special representative for Afghanistan, Roza Otunbayeva, said the day was a moment to show solidarity with the Afghan journalists trying to maintain independent reporting.

“Journalists are being forced to make editorial decisions based on fear, not public interest,” said Otunbayeva. “The persistent intimidation, threats, and attacks on journalists are unacceptable. We urge the Taliban de facto authorities to guarantee the freedom and independence of the media, and the safety of journalists, women and men alike.”

Deputy Broadcasting Minister Mahajar Farahi denied that journalists face obstacles in Afghanistan, saying the media is carrying out its activities in a normal way.

‘Interfering With NGO Work’

Meanwhile, a report said Wednesday a Taliban militant fired his rifle into the air at a food distribution event in Afghanistan, an example of their harassment of nongovernmental groups operating in the country.

The Taliban last December barred Afghan women from working at NGOs allegedly because they weren’t wearing the hijab, or observing gender segregation rules. In April, they said this ban extended to the UN.

It is being actively enforced by the country’s intelligence agency, which reports to the Taliban’s leadership in Kandahar, although their chief spokesman says there are no obstacles for UN operations in Afghanistan.

The latest quarterly report from the watchdog for U.S. assistance to Afghanistan, SIGAR, cited examples of Taliban interference and harassment of NGOs, including the rifle incident.

Organizations face security risks and harassment at Taliban checkpoints, unannounced Taliban visits to NGO offices, repeated requests for information on work plans, budgets, operations, and personnel, and demands for increased involvement in project decision-making and implementation.

Saudi Arabia Executes Young Shia Man

RIYADH (Dispatches) – The Saudi Ministry of Interior has announced that a death sentence against a young Shia man has been carried out, nearly seven years after his arrest.

The ministry said that it had carried out the death sentence against Manhal al-Ribh, who was convicted of “joining a terrorist cell seeking corruption in the country”.

Al-Ribh alleged has shot at security vehicles with intent to kill and possessing weapons and ammunition with the aim of dis-

turbing security.

He was also charged with hiding a wanted person and supporting his ideology, in an indirect reference to the Shia cleric Nimr al-Nimr who was executed by Saudi authorities in 2016.

Al-Ribh is the 20th person to be executed by Saudi authorities this year.

Saudi Arabia’s Eastern 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 been met with a heavy-handed crackdown, with regime forces increasing security measures across the province.

Ever since 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.

As a result, Islamic scholars have been executed, women’s rights campaigners have been put behind bars and tortured, and freedom of expression, association, and belief continue to be denied.

In January 2016, Saudi authorities executed Shia cleric Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr, who was an outspoken critic of the Riyadh regime. Nimr had been arrested in Qatif in 2012.

Senator Urges Release of New U.S. Report on Killing of Abu Akleh

WASHINGTON (Al Jazeera) – A Maryland senator has called on the administration of President Joe Biden to give legislators access to a report from the United States Security Coordinator (USSC) about the killing of Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh.

Democrat Chris Van Hollen said that he sent a letter to Secretary of State Antony Blinken urging him to make the assessment “available immediately for Congressional review”.

“I ask that you immediately authorize the release of the full and unedited USSC Report under appropriate classification to me and other interested Members of Congress,” the senator wrote to Blinken.

The Biden administration has not acknowledged the existence of the report, and it is not clear when the report was submitted. But Van Hollen said his office had

been in contact with individuals at the State Department over the matter for the past 12 days.

The USSC oversees and encourages security coordination between Zionist and Palestinian officials. The U.S. State Department did not immediately respond to Al Jazeera’s request for comment.

In his letter to Blinken, dated May 1, Van Hollen raised concerns that the government may alter the report.

“Most recently, we were informed that, before congressional release of the USSC Report is authorized, the Administration plans to make unspecified changes to its contents,” the letter reads.

“While the Administration has characterized its proposed changes as ‘technical,’ any actions to alter the USSC’s Summation Report in any way would violate the integrity of this process.”

Axios first reported on Van Hollen’s letter earlier on Tuesday before it was publicly released.

Abu Akleh, a U.S. citizen, was fatally shot by Zionist troops during a raid in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin on May 11, 2022. Her killing spurred worldwide condemnation and demands for justice.

U.S. officials have called for accountability in the case, but critics say the U.S. has not done enough to pressure its Zionist allies to ensure justice for the slain journalist.

Washington has rejected efforts to seek accountability for the killing of Abu Akleh at the International Criminal Court (ICC).

IMF: Inflation to Slow Growth Across Mideast

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) – Economies across the Middle East and Central Asia will likely slow this year as persistently high inflation and rising interest rates bite into their post-pandemic gains, the International Monetary Fund said Wednesday.

The IMF’s Regional Economic Outlook blamed in part rising energy costs, as well as elevated food prices, for the estimated slower growth. The report said that while oil-dependent economies of the Persian Gulf Arab

states and others in the region have reaped the benefits of elevated crude prices, other countries — such as Pakistan — have seen growth collapse after an unprecedented flooding last summer or as economic woes worsened.

The regional slowdown also comes as an explosion of fighting in Sudan between two top rival generals — who only a year ago as allies orchestrated a military coup that upended the African country’s transition to democ-

racy — threatens a nation where IMF and World Bank debt relief remains on hold.

Rising interest rates, used by central banks worldwide to try to stem inflation’s rise, increase the costs of borrowing money. That will affect nations carrying heavier debts, the IMF warned.

“This year we’re seeing inflation again being the most challenging issue for most of the countries,” Jihad Azour, the director of the Middle East and Central Asia Department at the

IMF, told The Associated Press. “For those who have high level of debt, the challenge of increase in interest rate globally, as well as also the tightening of monetary policy, is affecting them.”

The IMF forecast predicts regional growth will drop from 5.3% last year to 3.1% this year. Overall, regional inflation is expected to be at 14.8%, unchanged from last year, as the Ukraine war continues to pressure global food supplies and affect energy markets.