

Blast Kills 2 Children in Afghanistan

KHOST (Xinhua) – Two children were killed and two others injured as a blast rocked a house in Afghanistan's eastern Khost province on Tuesday, provincial police spokesman Mustaghfir Garbaz said. According to the official, the blast occurred inside a house in Bahram Khil village of Ismael Khil Mandozai district at 3:00 a.m. local time, killing two children on the spot and injuring two others. Following the blast, rescue teams and security personnel reached the site and shifted the injured children to a nearby hospital, the official added. Security authorities have begun an investigation into the incident, the official further said.

Bear sorrows and calamities patiently, otherwise you will never be happy.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

After Arab League Summit

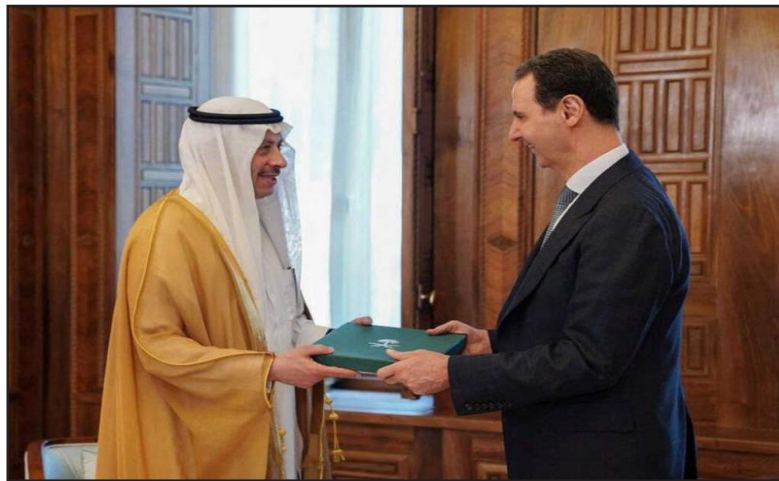
UAE Invites Syria's President to COP28

DAMASCUS (AP) – Syria's President Bashar Assad received an invitation to attend the upcoming COP28 climate talks in Dubai later this year.

Assad's invite, late Monday, to the climate talks comes as the Syrian president already is scheduled to attend the Arab League summit this Friday in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, years after being frozen out of regional politics.

Assad's invitation came in a letter from Emirati leader Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Syria's state-run SANA news agency reported. The agency published images of Assad reading the letter alongside an Emirati diplomat in Damascus. The UAE similarly had cut ties with Assad, only to slowly restore them in recent years.

Asked for comment, the Emirati office organizing the upcoming climate conference said in a statement



Syria's President Bashar al-Assad receives an invitation from Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz through Saudi Arabia Ambassador to Jordan, Naif Bin Bandar al-Sudairi, to attend the Arab League summit.

that the event marked "a milestone opportunity for the world to come together, course correct, and drive progress towards keeping the goals and ambitions of the Paris Climate Agreement alive."

"COP28 is committed to an inclusive COP process that produces transformational solutions," the statement added. "This can only happen if we have everyone in the room."

Syria is both a party to the Paris Climate Agreement, as well as the Kyoto Protocol. Scientists have linked a drought in Syria that began in 2007 to climate change, saying that it likely played a part in the conflict.

Already, activists have criticized the UAE for nominating the head of its dominant state oil company as the president of the talks. That company has plans to boost its production of both crude oil and natural gas, fossil fuels that produce more of the heat-trapping carbon dioxide that the UN negotiations hope to limit. But the oil chief, Sultan al-Jaber, has also helped oversee the Emirates pledging tens of billions of dollars toward renewable energy projects worldwide.

The Conference of the Parties — where COP gets its name — will be held at Dubai's Expo City from Nov. 30 through Dec. 12.

Dozens of Families Left Homeless in Gaza by Zionist Strikes



Palestinian Najah Nabhan in front of the rubble of her family home, flattened in an Israeli air strike in Beit Lahiya, in the northern Gaza Strip.

GAZA (Dispatches) – Near the debris of their home in the northern Gaza Strip, the Nabhan extended family spent their first night of displacement sleeping on the ground, in the open, after a Zionist air strike flattened their four-storey building.

The 50 members of the family - all civilians, including five people with physical and mental health problems - lived in eight separate apartments.

The air strike was carried out on the last day of the occupying regime's five-day-attack on the Gaza Strip - in a campaign it launched on 9 May - before an Egyptian-mediated ceasefire took effect at 10pm local time on Saturday.

The attack left at least 33 Palestinians killed, including six children and three women.

"My home is adjacent to my family's home. I decided to stay with them when the attack started because I thought it was safer than mine," Um Mohammed, the eldest sister in the family, told Middle East Eye.

"We suddenly saw my brother running towards us and shouting 'get out of the house it will be targeted', we told him 'you are talking about our home, that's our only shelter, where will we go?'"

"He said 'we only have five minutes, get out now'."

According to eyewitnesses, a Zionist officer called one of the family's neighbors on Saturday evening, and asked him to inform the family that the house would be targeted.

"He [the neighbor] told him [the officer] that the building housed people with disabilities, and that it would be impossible to get them out of the house in only five minutes. The officer said that it was not his business and that they would target the house anyway," Um Mohammed said.

Um Mohammed, whose home was also damaged in the strike, said that the family would stay displaced until a solution is found, because none of their relatives' houses could contain their large number.

"We are 50 individuals. People would welcome us for a day or two, but no

one would have the capacity to keep us any longer."

On the ground near Um Mohammed sat her younger sister, Ayat, who suffers from both physical disabilities and mental health problems.

When asked about her age, the 23-year-old woman told MEE that she was "three years old". However, she was well aware of what happened last night.

"Suddenly the house was destroyed. We forgot the medicine inside. We forgot the wheelchairs inside. We were afraid, we stayed on the street and we slept here," she said.

"We want [another] house that has medicine and wheelchairs inside."

During the five days of the attack, the occupying regime completely destroyed at least 93 housing units, and rendered 128 others uninhabitable. Another 1,820 housing units were damaged, according to the Gaza Ministry of Public Works and Housing.

In another neighborhood, in Beit Lahiya in the northern Gaza Strip, Samir Taha has already built a tent beside his destroyed home.

On Friday, seven F16s flattened the building's seven apartments and penetrated the ground.

Taha, whose previous home was also destroyed by an air strike in 2014, waited two years before the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism (GRM) helped him and his married children build this home.

On the ruins of his new home, Taha now stood tearful.

"During the 2014 offensive on Gaza, they bombed another house belonging to us. We remained displaced for two years before the Reconstruction [Mechanism] could build us a home," the 62-year-old man told MEE.

"I built a tent near my home and stayed in it for two years, I refused to take shelter in schools or to rent a house following the attack," he continued.

"This time, I will do the same. It wasn't enough that they destroyed the building, but [the missiles] also penetrated the ground. This reflects the terror [they want to inflict]."

Iraq Exhumes Remains of 605 Victims Killed by Daesh From Mass Grave

BAGHDAD (Al Jazeera) – The remains of 605 people believed to have been killed by Daesh terrorists have been exhumed from a mass grave near a prison in northern Iraq over the past two years, a government agency has said.

The terror group, which took over vast swathes of Iraq and Syria in 2014, had taken the inmates from the prison in the northern area of Badush and killed them near a waterway, according to the Mass Graves Department at the government-linked Foundation of Martyrs.

"The process of opening the graves took more than two years and resulted in the remov-

al of 605 bodies," department chief Dhiaa Karim told a press conference in Baghdad on Sunday, held in participation with a representative from the state-linked Medical Legal Directorate (MLD), according to Iraq's state news agency INA.

"The process of opening and excavating graves was carried out with the support of the International Commission on Missing Persons and the international investigation team after the issuance of the decision to open the graves," he said.

According to Karim, 401 body parts and 204 full bodies were recovered, and were handed over to the MLD for identifi-

cation as they were exposed to events like floods and changes in the climate.

The state news agency said the bodies of 78 of the victims have been identified so far.

The Iraqi government declared military victory against Daesh in December 2017.

Iraq has since unearthed mass graves of people thought to have been killed by Daesh in several areas of the country.

Other mass graves have also been found over the years, remnants of violence from former authoritarian leader Saddam Hussein's invasion of neighboring Iran during the 1980s, the 1991 Persian Gulf War, the

2003 United States-led invasion of Iraq, and years of bloodletting.

The decades of violence have meant that Iraq now has one of the highest numbers of missing persons in the world, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The United Nations has said over 200 mass graves have been linked to Daesh alone, containing thousands of bodies.

Families of the missing victims of the violence from Daesh and others have spoken out throughout the years, with many expressing frustration as the identification process could take years.

Afghan Refugees in UK Receive Eviction Notices

LONDON (Arab News) – Afghan refugee families in the UK have been handed eviction notices in the name of Home Secretary Suella Braverman, The Guardian has reported.

Many of the families had earlier been moved from London to Yorkshire, and for some, the pending eviction will be the fourth time they have been relocated since arriving in Britain.

Braverman signed the letters, which said: "For the avoidance of doubt, if possession is not delivered upon by the notice date, you will be a trespasser and the secretary of state for the home department shall be at liberty to evict you from the property."

The Afghan families were invited to the UK as part of Operation Pitting, Britain's evacuation mission from Kabul in mid-2021.

In March, the UK government announced that it was

ending its support of temporary hotels and accommodation for Afghan refugees, sending notice that families must accept the first offer of housing from the Home Office. About 24,500 people were affected by the move.

However, some families told The Guardian that slow bureaucracy had affected their ability to find their own housing.

Mohamed, one Afghan

resident, said: "There have been problems for all of us — with either the guarantor, the deposit or the eligibility of the local authority, or not having a job."

"This has all been made worse because we have been moved from London to Yorkshire, leaving jobs and contacts behind."

The families said the Home Office, in a letter sent last week, had pledged to find

alternative housing for the Afghans.

The letter said: "When you receive a housing offer from us, it is strongly advised that you accept so that you can start your settled life in the UK."

However, Home Office officials said the Afghans remaining in hotels may not be offered housing and might need to find their own alternatives.

Qatar, Bahrain Agree to Resume Flights

MANAMA (Middle East Eye) – Bahrain and Qatar have agreed to resume flights starting 25 May, the Bahrain News Agency has reported, marking the latest sign of a diplomatic thaw between the Persian Gulf states amid a wider push to de-escalate tensions in the region.

The two countries re-established relations in April 2023 in a meeting held in the Saudi capital of Riyadh.

Manama took part in a nearly

four-year Persian Gulf blockade of Qatar that stemmed from acrimony over Doha's support for the Muslim Brotherhood, and other movements that Saudi Arabia and its allies labeled "terrorists". Qatar denied the allegations.

The Persian Gulf states have since moved to patch up ties in a tide of regional rapprochement. While Saudi Arabia moved quicker to reestablish relations with Qatar, the UAE

and Bahrain have been slower.

Bahrain, a country of just 1.5 million, was the only Persian Gulf Arab state to experience major unrest during the 2011 Arab Spring protest movement, with citizens demanding greater political freedoms and equal rights regardless of religious identity.

Manama's rulers quashed the uprising with the help of Saudi Arabia, and since then the Bahraini government has cracked

down on political opposition.

Persian Gulf states have looked to move past tensions as they focus on shoring up their domestic economies, riding a wave of high oil and gas prices that have allowed them to plow funds into megaprojects.

The Qatar-hosted World Cup last year gave Middle Eastern leaders a high-profile format to express the shift in their approach to the region for the en-

tire world to see.

During the tournament, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman was seen sporting a scarf in the colors of the Qatari flag. Qatar's emir reciprocated by draping a Saudi flag around his shoulders.

More recently, Saudi Arabia has sought to position itself as a mediator in regional conflicts such as in Sudan, where it has made a series of failed attempts to negotiate a truce.