

BEIRUT (Xinhua) – Lebanese caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati has called on Arab brothers to assist Lebanon in securing a safe return of Syrian refugees to their homeland. “The return of refugees cannot be achieved if Arabs do not unite their efforts with the support of the international community, and in communication and dialogue with Syria,” a statement by Lebanon’s Council of Ministers quoted Mikati as saying during the Arab League summit in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Mikati said Lebanon “has never hesitated to open its doors to our displaced Syrian brothers out of faith in the brotherhood of the two peoples and the advancement of humanitarian considerations.”

He is the wisest and the most knowing man who advises people not to lose hope and faith in the Mercy of Allah and not to be too sure and over-confident of immunity from His Wrath and Punishment.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

## Thousands Commemorate Palestinian Martyrs in Gaza

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – Thousands of Palestinians have rallied in the Gaza Strip in a memorial to the martyrs of the Zionist regime’s recent campaign of terrorism in the coastal territory, pledging to sustain their resistance in the face of the occupying entity.

The demonstration was held in Gaza City on Friday in honor of the 30-plus Palestinians, who were martyred during several days of incessant airstrikes by the regime that targeted the Palestinian territory earlier this month.

The Zionist regime launched the campaign of deadly bombings on May 9, prompting the Islamic Jihad, a resistance group based in Gaza, to fire over 1,000 rockets toward the occupied territories.

The conflict marked the worst episode of fighting between Gaza’s resistance factions and the Zionist regime since a 10-day war imposed by Tel Aviv on the blockaded territory in 2021.

After five days of fighting, the two sides agreed to an Egyptian-brokered ceasefire that took effect on Saturday night.

Addressing the Friday commemoration event, Islamic Jihad leader,



Palestinians rallying in commemoration of those who were martyred during Zionist airstrikes targeting the Gaza Strip earlier in the month.

Khaled al-Batsh, remembered the group’s commanders, who were killed in assassination operations waged during the Zionist onslaught. “Today, the Islamic Jihad holds this ceremony to commemorate its martyrs and the leaders, Khalil Al-Bahtini, Jihad Ghannam, Tareq Ezedine, Khadder Adnan, Ali Ghali, Ahmed Abu Dakka, Eyad al-Hasani, and for all the martyrs of our people.”

“We want to tell the whole world that, though, the F-16 airstrikes and

the American 139 rockets were fired toward us, this nation is still alive and will continue the resistance,” he added.

“We also attest our right to freedom. From their blood, we will continue the resistance. From their death, we receive the power to face the Zionists. We will continue.”

Meanwhile, several Palestinians sustained injuries while dozens of others suffered tear gas inhalation as Zionist troops violently dispersed anti-settlement demonstrations in

the northern part of the occupied West Bank.

Ghassan Daghlas, who monitors settlement activities in the northern West Bank, said extremist Jewish settlers, under the protection of Zionist troops, barged their way into Qaryout village, located 28 kilometers (17 miles) southeast of Nablus, on Friday, triggering confrontations with local residents.

Zionist troops then fired rubber-coated steel bullets and tear gas canisters at the protesting villagers, injuring a number of them. Dozens of others suffered breathing difficulties from tear gas during clashes with troops and settlers.

Similar confrontations erupted when Zionist troops cracked down on anti-settlement rallies in Beita town and Beit Dajan village, south and east of Nablus.

The Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) said two Palestinian civilians suffered breathing problems in Beita, while twelve others were wounded in Beit Dajan.

In a related development, a number of Palestinians were injured after Zionist troops fired rubber-coated metal bullets and tear gas bombs at protesters in Kafr Qaddum town.

## Turks Abroad Begin Voting in Presidential Election Runoff



People wave Turkish flags during a gathering to mark the Youth and Sports Day, ahead of the May 28 runoff vote, in Istanbul, Turkey May 19, 2023.

ISTANBUL (Reuters/Anadolu) – Turkish citizens based abroad began voting on Saturday in Turkey’s presidential runoff election between the incumbent Tayyip Erdogan and his challenger Kemal Kilicdaroglu, who aims to bring an end to the president’s two-decade rule.

The runoff election will be held in Turkey on May 28 after Erdogan fell just short of the 50% threshold needed to win the presidential vote outright last Sunday in what had been expected to be his greatest ever political challenge.

Some 3.4 million Turks are eligible to vote abroad, out of a total electorate of more than 64 million, and will cast their ballots from May 20-24.

State-owned Anadolu news agency said voting had started in countries across Asia and Europe. Germany is home to the world’s largest Turkish diaspora, where there are some 1.5 million Turkish citizens eligible to vote.

In last Sunday’s vote, Erdogan’s ruling AK Party and its nationalist allies won a comfortable parliamentary majority.

The Turkish President, in an interview, discussed the second round of the presidential election on May 28, expressing his belief that the Turkish people will, once again, demonstrate their strong democracy, with a significant voter turnout reaching up to 90 percent, Anadolu News Agency reports.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan also addressed various topics, ranging

from the election process to foreign policy during his interview with CNN International.

When asked about his comfort level, given his successful track record in winning elections over the past 20 years and breaking records, Erdogan reiterated his confidence in the Turkish people and their strong democracy, emphasizing the importance of the high voter turnout. He expressed hope that the people would not disappoint.

On the reminder of U.S. President, Joe Biden, labeling him as an autocrat during his election campaign, the Turkish President questioned how a person who made it to the second round, not the first, could be considered a dictator.

He stressed that the People’s Alliance would enter Parliament with 322 deputies, and the person leading the alliance (Erdogan) would emerge as the winner of the second round, asking: “What kind of dictatorship is this?”

When asked if he would work with the Biden administration if re-elected, Erdogan stated that there was no doubt that he would work with President Biden, and that if the Biden administration changes he would work with the new one as well.

In response to a question about the West’s stance towards Russia in the Ukraine conflict, with reference to his previous comments about the West pursuing a more provocative policy, President Erdogan said the West had not demonstrated a balanced approach in this regard.

## Kuwaiti Fencer Withdraws From World Cup to Avoid Zionist Opponent

KUWAIT (Dispatches) – Kuwaiti fencer Abdulaziz Alshatti has withdrawn from the 2023 Fédération Internationale d’Escrime (FIE) Senior World Cup contests in Turkey to avoid facing a Zionist contestant over support for the Palestinian cause and refusal of normalization with the Tel Aviv regime.

The 32-year-old athlete pulled out of the competitions in Istanbul as soon as he found out he was scheduled to take on a Zionist competitor.

“I withdrew from the tournament because of the presence of a representative from the Zionist entity in the same group,” Alshatti wrote in an Arabic-language

post published on his Instagram page.

He added, “My trust in God is great, and goodness is coming with His permission. His generosity is not delayed, but rather comes at the right time.”

Back in November 2018, Alshatti quit the World Fencing Championship in Switzerland over a draw that set him on course for a match-up against a Zionist opponent.

Last September, Kuwaiti karate fighter Mohammad al-Otaibi withdrew from the 2022 Karate 1-Premier League contests in the Azerbaijani capital of Baku not to face an Israeli contestant.

Otaibi was set to participate in

the male kumite 60-kilogram division of the international tournament. He, however, pulled out of the competitions as soon as he found out he was scheduled to take on Zionist competitor Ronen Gehtbarg.

In May 2021, Kuwait’s National Assembly unanimously approved bills that outlaw any deals or normalization of ties with the occupying regime.

On August 18, 2020, 37 Kuwaiti lawmakers called on their government to reject a normalization deal between the Zionist regime and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Anti-Zionist sentiments run high in Kuwait. A poll conducted

in 2019 by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, an American think tank, showed that 85 percent of Kuwaitis oppose normalizing ties with the regime.

In recent years, an increasing number of athletes from Arab and Muslim countries have avoided facing Zionist opponents in international competitions in support of the Palestinian cause.

They view the participation of Zionist athletes in sports events as a scheme to help the occupying regime gradually normalize its relations with Muslim and Arab nations despite its brutal occupation of Palestine and its relentless crimes against Palestinians.

## Egypt Prisoner Sends Help Plea After Repeated Attacks by Officers

CAIRO (MEMO) – The Egyptian Network for Human Rights (ENHR) has published a plea for help by Ahmed Zaidan Abdel Azim, 38, an Egyptian prisoner serving a 15-year sentence at Wadi al-Natrun Prison.

Abdel Azim said he had suffered severe violations, such as beatings, electrocution, threats of isolation and other retaliatory measures, by the head of investigations, Officer Momen Awais and other officers and wardens. This is despite his deteriorating health condition and his need for heart surgery.

“If anything happens to me at any time, the people responsible for that are Momen Awais, Emad Hamdi and the administration of the 430 Wadi Al-Natrun Prison,” Abdel Azim expressed in his plea.

Abdel Azim’s family confirmed that he constantly receives threats of isolation and further obstinacy in finalizing his treatment procedures following the deterioration of his

health and his urgent need for heart surgery. They expressed their fear of Officer Awais’s brutality against their son, who continually suffers torment and violence at his hands, according to the ENHR report.

Over the past weeks, the ENHR has issued several statements explaining the suffering of prisoner Abdel Azim and the repeated assaults he has endured by the head of investigations, Officer Awais, his assistant Officer Ahmed Abdel Sattar, prisoner Emad Hamdi, the right-hand man of the head of investigations and the one who leads the prison First Lieutenant Ahmed el-Saeidy.

According to the ENHR statements, during these violations, Abdel Azim was whipped, beaten, verbally insulted and electrocuted, leading to the deterioration in his health and his admission to the prison hospital. Reports issued after his examination confirmed that he suffers from heart palpitations, excess electricity in the heart and needs surgery and

a stent. Abdel Azim’s family has submitted several requests to the Egyptian Prisons Authority for his medical release, given his poor condition and urgent need for treatment outside the prison hospital, in addition to serving nearly ten years out of his 15-year sentence, but all efforts have been in vain.

The family has also filed complaints with the Prisons Authority about the assaults he has suffered at the hands of Awais and others involved in attacking and torturing him, but no one has paid any attention to them, according to the ENHR’s statement.

The ENHR has called on the Egyptian Public Prosecutor to immediately intervene and conduct an urgent investigation into the complaint of prisoner Abdel Azim’s family, his protection from the brutality and persecution of Awais and investigate the numerous reports submitted by the families of prisoners at Wadi Al-Natrun Prison.

## Clashes Between Tribal Gunmen Kill 8, Wound 15 in Yemen

ADEN (Dispatches) – Eight people were killed and at least 15 others wounded in clashes between tribal gunmen in Yemen’s northeastern oil-rich province of Marib, a government official say.

Ferocious clashes erupted between gunmen from the al-Munif and al-Fahih tribes in the al-Wadi district of Marib, the local government official said on condition of anonymity.

The clashes were caused by a dispute over land ownership between the two tribes, the source said, adding a ceasefire began to take effect on Friday night.

Despite the ceasefire, tensions remain high as both sides have deployed heavily armed reinforcements in different areas of Marib, according to the official.

Marib province, which houses Yemen’s most crucial oil and gas fields,

is controlled by Saudi-backed mercenaries and former government officials. In recent years, the province has been engulfed in intense conflicts between Sana’a-based government and Saudi-backed forces.

Saudi Arabia invaded Yemen in March 2015 in collaboration with a number of its allies and with arms and logistical support from the United States and several other Western states.

The objective was to return power to Yemen’s former Riyadh-backed regime and crush the popular Ansarullah resistance movement, which has been running state affairs in the absence of a functional government in Yemen.

While the Saudi-led coalition has failed to achieve its objectives, the war has killed hundreds of thousands of Yemenis and spawned the world’s worst humanitarian crisis.