

# Iraqi Fencers Refuse to Face Zionist Opponents

**BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – The Iraqi national fencing team withdrew from the Epe World Cup in Turkey after they had to compete against opponents from the Zionist regime.**

The Iraqi Fencing Federation announced in a statement that “due to the participation of the Zionist regime’s team in the individual division in the Istanbul Epe World Cup and after the group stage, some Iraqi fencers were drawn against Israeli opponents, we decided to withdraw from the competition,” the Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported.

This decision is made according to a piece of legislation approved by the Iraqi parliament which bans any normalization with the criminal Zionist regime in solidarity with the oppressed people of Palestine.

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



*Supporters of the Popular Mobilization Units wave a large Palestinian flag during a demonstration in the capital, Baghdad, on May 20, 2021, in support of the Palestinians.*

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.

On Saturday, Kuwaiti fencer Abdulaziz Alshatti withdrew from the event 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 gener-

osity 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.

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.

## Sana’a, Beijing Sign Oil Exploration Deal in Yemen

**SANA’A (Dispatches) – Yemen’s Sana’a-based government and representative of the Chinese government, as well as Anton Company, have signed a memorandum of understanding in the capital Sana’a to invest in the field of oil exploration in Yemen.**

According to the Minister of Oil and Minerals, Ahmed Daris, the memorandum of understanding came after many negotiations and coordination with several foreign companies to invest in vital and important sector, in light of the available investment opportunities and

the advantages and facilities that will serve these companies.

The minister welcomed the investment companies in the field of oil sector of Yemen, stressing the government’s keenness to provide facilities to encourage investors.

He called on all international companies to visit Yemen to see the ingredients, investment opportunities, advantages and facilities that will serve their investments.

“There are many ongoing negotiations with several international companies to enter and invest in the field of oil explo-

ration in Yemen”, the minister added. “Work will be done to put the final touches to sign memorandums of understanding with them.”

He warned foreign companies against dealing or concluding any contracts with the coalition-backed former officials, calling for the oil companies operating in Yemen to the need to adhere to production sharing agreements and all circulars and directives issued to them by the Sana’a’s ministry of oil since 2018.

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.

## Nearly 500,000 Expats Vote in Turkey’s Presidential Runoff

**ANKARA (Anadolu) – Nearly 500,000 million Turkish nationals have cast their votes abroad in the country’s foreign missions and customs gates in the second round of Turkey’s presidential election scheduled for May 28, Anadolu reports.**

Since overseas voting began Saturday, 452,257 voters cast ballots at Turkish diplomatic missions, while 19,477 voted at customs gates, for a total of 471,734 people, according to

figures from the Supreme Election Council (YSK).

Voting at diplomatic missions will end May 24, while the process will continue at customs gates until 5 p.m. local time May 28.

Millions of voters went to the polls May 14 to elect the president and members of the Turkish 600-seat parliament.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s People’s Alliance won a majority in

parliament, while the presidential race is headed to a second round.

In the first round, no candidate won an outright majority, although Erdogan was leading.

Erdogan will face Kemal Kilicdaroglu, the leader of the main opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP) and joint candidate for the six-party opposition Nation Alliance, in the runoff vote.

## Iraq’s Fishery Struggles to Survive Water Scarcity, Overfishing

**BAGHDAD (Xinhua) – Hashim al-Musawi, a 76-year-old fisherman living on the western bank of the Tigris River in central Baghdad, feels heart-breaking when he sees that the river becomes muddy and polluted.**

The old fisherman learned to fish from his father, but today fishing can hardly feed his family.

Fish production is one of the Iraqi vital economic sectors, but it has suffered many setbacks in recent years due to climate change, water scarcity, pollution by sewage and industrial waste, as well as overfishing.

Hazim Dahmouh, head of the Fish Hatchery Department at the

Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture, told Xinhua that water scarcity is the major problem that faces the fish-producing process in Iraq as increasing drought has led to a significant decline in the country’s fisheries.

In addition, Dahmouh said that neglect of management, including fishing during the breeding season and overfishing, were also among the problems facing the fish industry in Iraq.

The Fish Hatchery Department is struggling to revive the fish stock by pouring millions of artificially-bred fish fry into water bodies, but the fingerlings are also affected by water scarcity as it requires a con-

stant water flow.

Dahmouh spent a two-month training course in Shanghai in 2016 on fish farming and aquaculture and believes the Chinese experience in fish farming, such as using recirculating aquaculture systems, could effectively avoid the risks of deterioration of fish stocks.

According to the UN Environment Program, Iraq ranks as the fifth most vulnerable country in the world to climate change.

Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, UN special envoy for Iraq, warned in her briefing to the UN Security Council on May 18 that water represents the most critical climate

emergency for Iraq.

“By 2035, it is estimated that Iraq will have the capacity to meet only 15 percent of its water demands. 90 percent of Iraq’s rivers are polluted, and seven million people are currently suffering from reduced access to water,” she stressed.

Iraq heavily relies on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which originate in Turkey, to fulfill its water needs, while the water levels in the twin rivers have declined significantly over the past years as a result of drought, the construction of dams, and the diversion of water upstream, according to Iraqi officials.

### Naval...

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This is a sign of the waning power and hegemony of the U.S.,” he said. Last week, after the ships docked at Oman’s Salalah port upon its return to Iran, Adm. Irani said the U.S. had failed to prevent it from sailing through the Panama Canal.

The flotilla entered the first naval zone of the country on Saturday in the port city of Bandar Abbas and was welcomed by Admiral Irani and other senior navy officials.

Shahrami said during the ceremony that the successful voyage showed the U.S.-led world order “has been replaced by a multi-polar world order.”

In his message on Saturday, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei hailed the “grand and successful naval mission” of the Iranian Navy flotilla.

Iran’s Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said the mission happened for the first time in Iran’s history that indigenous ships circumnavigated the globe.

“In this great mission, Iran showed that the oppressive and unilateral sanctions imposed by the U.S. can be defeated. It also increased hope in the hearts of the independent nations of the world,” he noted.

### Protests...

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ministers and herds of settlers”, and said the move “confirms the depths of danger looming over Al-Aqsa, under this Zionist fascist regime and the arrogance of its ministers from the extreme right”.

On Thursday, Ben Gvir and other far-right ministers and lawmakers joined the divisive “flag march” in East Al-Quds, which saw Israeli police officers and Jewish extremists assaulting Palestinians and journalists.

Marchers threw stones at journalists covering the gathering in the Damascus Gate area near the Old City. At least two journalists were hit in the head and wounded.

Dozens of participants were carrying the black flag of the racist far-right Lehava group while chanting “your village will be burnt”.

Elsewhere, Jewish extremists marching through the Old City’s Muslim quarter beat Palestinian residents, leading to some scuffles. Zionist forces intervened by assaulting Palestinians who were already under attack.

### Three...

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Five of the 10 deadliest mass shootings in America over the past eight years have been in Texas. It has not even been one year since 19 children and two teachers were killed in a shooting at Robb elementary school in Uvalde, the deadliest shooting in the state and the third-deadliest school shooting in the U.S.

At more than 1 million, Texas is also the state with the most registered guns.

### Iran...

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The ringleader, who was being monitored by IRGC forces for four years, was in charge of recruiting extremist elements in a number of Iranian provinces, including Tehran.

In his Sunday remarks, Khatib said more than 200 anti-Iran media outlets, 35 think tanks, and dozens of intelligence services were actively involved in foreign-sponsored riots that broke out in some parts of the country.

Foreign-backed riots erupted in Iran in mid-September after the death of 22-year-old Iranian woman Mahsa Amini, who fainted at a police station in the capital Tehran and was pronounced dead three days later at the hospital.

Iran’s intelligence community has said several countries, including the United States and the United Kingdom, have used their spy and propaganda apparatuses to provoke violent riots in the country.

### Six...

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The terrorist attack came after Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif inaugurated a marketplace and a power transmission line along their shared border Thursday in a significant move aimed at boosting regional trade and energy cooperation.

Raisi said the project had set the stage for Tehran and Islamabad to expand their economic and energy exchanges.

The transmission line would export 100 megawatts of Iranian electricity to Pakistan’s border province of Baluchistan. The impoverished, natural resources-rich region already imports 100 megawatts of low-cost power from Iran.

“We are fully prepared to further deepen our relations with our neighboring country Pakistan in the energy sector,” the Iranian president said.

The marketplace opened by the two countries Thursday links Iran’s southeastern city of Pishin to Pakistan’s southwestern city of Mand. It is one of the six border markets the two counties are jointly constructing.

“The message of this project is one of security. ... Today, both countries see the border as an opportunity and not a threat,” the Iranian leader said, speaking through an official interpreter.

Terrorist attacks in Pakistan’s sparsely populated Balochistan carried out by takfiri terrorists in the adjacent Sistan-Baluchistan province of Iran have long been a source of bilateral tensions.