



Tunisia Appoints Envoy to Syria for First Time in 11 Years

TUNIS (MEMO) – Tunisia's President Kais Saied has appointed a new ambassador to Syria, the first diplomat to assume the post since Tunis cut diplomatic ties with Damascus 11 years ago following the foreign-backed war was unleashed on Syria.

The Tunisian presidency said in a statement that Saied supervised the handing over of credentials to Muhammad al-Mahdhabi, ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Tunisia, to the Syrian Arab Republic in the presence of Tunisian Foreign Minister Nabil Ammar.

VOL NO: LV 11963 TEHRAN / Est.1959

Saturday, April 29, 2023, Ordibehesht 9, 1402, Shawwal 8, 1444

Zionist Troops Martyr Palestinians, Resistance Vows Retaliation

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – Zionist troops shot and killed a teenager in the occupied West Bank on Friday, the Palestinian Health Ministry said.

The shooting came during a raid by Zionist forces and stone-throwing Palestinians in a village near the town of Bethlehem, according to Palestinian media reports. The ministry identified the teenager as Mustafa Sabah, 16, adding he was shot in the chest.

Footage posted on social media shows people carrying the teen's body after the shooting and shouting "Allahu Akbar," or "God is the Greatest" in Arabic.

Earlier Friday, the army raided the Jenin refugee camp in the West Bank and arrested several Palestinians, the regime's military said. Palestinian media reported that two youths were wounded in ensuing clashes with the military there.

A day earlier, Zionist troops shot dead a Palestinian man in the central part of the occupied West Bank over an alleged stabbing and car-ramming attack against the regime's troops.

The occupying regime's military



Zionist troops are seen at the scene of an alleged car-ramming attack near the settlement of Ariel in the northern West Bank, on April 27, 2023.

claimed in a statement that the incident occurred near the illegal settlement of Ariel, located close to the Palestinian city of Salfit.

It further alleged that the Palestinian man initially tried to run over soldiers who were at a junction in the area, and then tried to stab them.

The man was shot and killed. No Zionist troops were injured in the incident.

The official Palestinian Wafa news agency later identified the

victim as 39-year-old Ahmad Yaqoub Taha.

Videos of the incident circulating on the social media showed a Zionist trooper asking the Palestinian man to get out of his car at gunpoint.

As soon as the man got out of the car, the soldier fired several live bullets at him, killing him on the spot.

On Monday, Zionist troops killed a young Palestinian man and injured three others during a raid on

a refugee camp in the eastern West Bank city of Ariha.

The governor of Ariha and the Jordan Valley, Jihad Abu al-Asal, said the man, identified as 20-year-old Suleiman Ayesh, was fatally shot in the Aqabat Jaber refugee camp.

Over the past months, the occupying regime has ramped up attacks on Palestinian towns and cities throughout the occupied territories. As a result of these attacks, dozens of Palestinians have lost their lives and many others have been arrested.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian resistance movement of the Islamic Jihad says it has coordinated a response together with its fellow Lebanese resistance movement of Hezbollah to the Zionist regime's potential assassination of the resistance's leaders.

"There exists an agreement between us and Hezbollah over [joint delivering of] a response to the occupying Israeli regime's potential assassination of one of the resistance's leaders," said Walid al-Qatati, a member of the Gaza Strip-based resistance group's Political Bureau.

Poll: American Attitudes Towards Ally Zionist Regime Shifting



Demonstrators gather to protest against the occupying regime outside the U.S. Capitol in Washington DC, on 30 April 2022.

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – A new poll has found that more than 40 percent of Democrats in the U.S. with an opinion on the Zionist regime viewed it as a regime "with segregation similar to apartheid", and a similar percentage of Democrats support the Palestinian-led Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement.

The study comes at a time of heightened tensions between the far-right regime in the occupied territories led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Democratic Party in the U.S., and appears to show a shift in American attitudes towards its longstanding ally, according to the poll's researchers.

"This is remarkable because the use of the term 'apartheid' in the American mainstream discourse, while increasingly heard, is still highly uncommon and even taboo in many circles," said Shibley Telhami, director of the Critical Issues Poll at the University of Maryland, which conducted the survey.

In the poll, conducted from 27 March to 5 April 2023 among 1,203 respondents, Telhami fielded several questions, including: "You may have been following recent developments in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza. In your opinion, which of the following is closer to

describing the way Israel looks to you."

The options that were provided included "a vibrant democracy, a flawed democracy, a state with restricted minority rights, and a state with segregation similar to apartheid", or "I don't know".

While the majority of respondents stated that they did not know, among Democrats who did express an opinion on the question, 44 percent said that the Zionist regime resembles an apartheid regime. This follows 34 percent of Democrats who said that the occupying regime is a flawed "democracy".

In terms of Republicans who answered the question, 20 percent of respondents that expressed an opinion other than "I don't know" said the regime is similar to apartheid.

"It is clear that public attitudes about Israel are shifting. The term 'apartheid' appears to have become a common term among many Americans, especially Democrats," said Telhami, who is also a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

"And even the BDS movement, which has faced considerable obstacles in the American mainstream, seems to have sizable support among Democrats who expressed their opinion."

Turkish Citizens Living Abroad Start Voting in General Election

BERLIN (Al Jazeera) – Some 3.4 million Turkish citizens living abroad have begun in national elections that will decide whether President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will continue governing Turkey after two decades in power.

The overseas balloting began on Thursday amid concerns about Erdogan's health after he was forced to cancel election rallies on Wednesday and Thursday.

However, the 69-year-old leader was scheduled to attend a Thursday ceremony via video link to mark the inauguration of Turkey's first nuclear power plant. Turkey's health minister also said Erdogan's condition was improving.

"I was with him this morning. His health is fine," Fahrettin Koca, a physician by training, said Thursday. "The effect of his gastrointestinal infection has decreased. He will continue his schedule."

The biggest contingents of overseas voters include 400,000 Turks in France and 1.5 million in Germany who can cast their ballots in Turkey's presidential and parlia-

mentary elections until May 9. Voting in Turkey itself does not take place until May 14.

Erdogan served as Turkey's prime minister from March 2003 to August 2014 and has held the president's office since then.

In Berlin, voter Fatma, who declined to provide her surname, said she backed the current president.

"Erdogan is strong. We are behind him," she told The Associated Press news agency.

Her comments were echoed by 39-year-old Ozlem Dinc in Paris, who expressed full support for Erdogan.

"We hope from the bottom of our hearts that he will come to power again and that he will conquer the whole world," she said.

Others were critical of the long-time president and the changes he has made to Turkey's political system.

"We have to change the president first and then the system," said voter Sema Jude in Paris. "The presidential system in Turkey is not democratic and it is like a dictatorship."

UAE Tops List of Retired U.S. Officers Working for Foreign Governments

ABU DHABI (Middle East Eye) – The United Arab Emirates was the top country of employment for former U.S. military officers doing paid work for foreign governments, according to a memo provided by the Department of Defence to members of Congress.

According to the Office of the Secretary of Defence, which sent a response to an inquiry from Senator Elizabeth Warren, there were 450 notifications of employment for foreign governments by retired military officers from 2012 through 2022. Of them, 12 were denied, 21 were administratively closed or withdrawn, and 11 are still pending approval from the Department of State and Defence.

The UAE took the top spot among 47 nations listed in the report, with more than half of the approvals for work be-

ing in the Emirates, either directly with the country or with contractors working on the government's behalf.

The highest-ranking officer to work for the UAE in recent years was retired general, Jim Mattis, who served as former President Donald Trump's secretary of defence. Mattis served as a military advisor to the UAE in 2015 and returned to U.S. service where he became Trump's Pentagon chief in 2017.

The salaries of those working for the UAE are murky. According to the Defence Department memo, only 35 retired officers disclosed their compensation. The remaining 185 are listed as "not available" or "not reported", according to Responsible Statecraft.

Middle East Eye contacted the UAE embassy in Washington for a response to this article but did not receive a reply

by the time of publication.

The UAE is a key U.S. partner in the region, but Abu Dhabi has charted a more independent foreign policy course not always aligned with Washington.

Emirati companies have been sanctioned by Washington for helping Iran evade sanctions. The UAE has also moved closer, militarily, to China.

The Wall Street Journal previously reported that Beijing's moves to build a secret military base in the UAE rattled the U.S. The U.S. suspended talks with the UAE to acquire the F-35 fighter jet out of concerns Beijing would gain access to sensitive U.S. technologies.

The UAE has also been accused of meddling in U.S. politics. According to leaked U.S. intelligence documents reported by the Washington Post, the UAE made illegal and legal attempts to sway

U.S. foreign policy in its favor by exploiting campaign finance contributions and the American lobbying industry.

Other Persian Gulf monarchies feature prominently in the list.

Former NSA head, General Keith Alexander, signed a \$700,000 contract to advise Saudi Arabia on cybersecurity following the 2018 killing of Middle East Eye and Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi. The CIA concluded that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman ordered the killing.

Admiral William Fallon, who served as the commander of U.S. Central Command from 2007-2008, appears on the list as part-owner of the Global Alliance Advisors consulting firm, which is expected to reap \$23m from the government of Qatar for consulting services.

UN: Taliban Must 'Swiftly Reverse' Crackdown on Women's Rights

NEW YORK (Reuters/AFP) – The UN Security Council (UNSC) has unanimously condemned a ban by the Taliban on Afghan women working for the United Nations in Afghanistan, calling on Taliban leaders to "swiftly reverse" a crackdown on the rights of women and girls.

The resolution – drafted by the United Arab Emirates and Japan – describes the ban as "unprecedented in the history of the United Nations" and says it "undermines human rights and humanitarian principles". The resolution also asserts "the indispensable role of women in Afghan society".

UAE's ambassador to the UN, Lana Nusseibeh, said more than 90 countries co-sponsored the resolution – "from Afghanistan's immediate neighborhood, from the Muslim world and from all corners of the earth".

"This ... support makes our fundamental message today even more significant – the world will not sit by silently as women in Afghanistan are erased from society," she told the UNSC.

The UNSC vote came days before a planned international meeting, regarding Afghanistan, in Doha on

May 1-2. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will convene behind closed doors special envoys on Afghanistan from various countries to work on a unified approach to dealing with the Taliban.

"We will not stand for the Taliban's repression of women and girls," The United States deputy ambassador to the UN, Robert Wood, told the UNSC. "These decisions are indefensible. They are not seen anywhere else in the world."

"The Taliban edicts are causing irreparable damage to Afghanistan."

Earlier this month, the Taliban began enforcing the ban on Afghan women working for the UN after stopping most women working for humanitarian aid groups in December. Since toppling the West-ern-backed government in 2021, the group has also tightened controls on women's access to public life, including barring women from university and closing girls' high schools.

A senior Taliban leader warned the United Nations Security Council Friday to give up its "failed policy of pressure" after members adopted a resolution con-

demning Kabul's growing restrictions on women.

Anas Haqqani, a senior leader in the Taliban movement but with no official government role, said the council "shouldn't continue the failed policy of pressure".

"Any position adopted, that is not based upon a deep understanding won't give the desired results and will always be ineffective," he said on Twitter.

He said the council should instead remove diplomatic and financial sanctions placed on a slew of officials which "amounts to the collective punishment of Afghans".

Russian ambassador Vasily Nebenzia criticized the text of the resolution despite signing it.

"We seriously regret and are disappointed that steps and a more ambitious approach and texts were blocked by Western colleagues," he said.

"If you're so sincere, why not return the assets you've stolen from the country and without any pre-conditions," he said, referring to the \$7 billion in Afghan central bank assets frozen by the United States after the Taliban government seized power.