

# Damascus: EU Excluded Syria From Brussels Conference to Conceal Own Bankrupt Policies



U.S. occupation forces on patrol near an oilfield in northeastern Syria.

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – Syria has condemned the European Union’s decision not to invite representatives from the Damascus government to the seventh Brussels Conference on “supporting the future of Syria and the region.”

The Syrian Ministry of Foreign Af-

fairs and Expatriates said in a statement on Saturday that organizers of the event, which took place on June 14 and 15, only invited corrupt individuals affiliated to Daesh, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and other Takfiri terrorist outfits.

The EU excluded Syria from the Brussels conference to conceal its own bankrupt policies, the Syrian Foreign Ministry said.

The ministry said the guests oppose the Syrian nation’s primary interests, obstruct attempts aimed at repatriation

of Syrian refugees to their homeland and impede efforts aimed at the transfer of humanitarian supplies to liberated areas and/or quake-devastated districts.

The statement further said Damascus has successfully foiled foreign-sponsored plots seeking intervention in its domestic affairs.

Syria reaffirms that military and political attempts to undermine the Arab country’s position have miserably failed, the ministry said.

“Syria, which has withstood a bloody campaign of terrorism, is determined to cooperate with Arab brethren and allied states across the world to consolidate its victories and offset the dire upshot of economic sanctions against it,” the statement said.

During the 7th Brussels Conference on “Supporting the future of Syria and the region” on June 15, the donors pledged €5.6 billion for 2023 and beyond, including €4.6 billion for 2023 and €1 billion for 2024 and beyond.

The conference gathered representatives of 57 countries, including EU member states, and over 30 international organizations, in addition to EU institutions.

# Afghanistan Establishes New Public Holiday to Mark U.S. Pullout

KABUL (Dispatches) – The Taliban administration’s website has announced the creation of a new public holiday in Afghanistan, dedicated to commemorating the departure of the last U.S. soldier from the country.

According to the official statement, the occasion will be celebrated annually on August 31.

Last year, the authorities and supporters of the Taliban organized festivities to mark the first anniversary of the withdrawal.

Notably, Taliban fighters held a rally at Massoud Square in Kabul, near the former U.S. embassy building.

U.S. Army Major General Chris Donahue, the last American soldier, boarded a military transport plane on August 31, 2021 shortly before the withdrawal deadline. This event marked the conclusion of a demanding 20-year campaign.

In 2001, the U.S. and its allies deployed troops to Afghanistan

as part of the so-called “War on Terror”, with the alleged goal of combating Al-Qaeda and other extremist groups. While Western forces swiftly captured Kabul, the Taliban maintained control over significant areas of the country, resulting in a prolonged conflict with insurgents. Over time, the campaign became increasingly unpopular within the United States.

In August 2021, the Taliban successfully recaptured several

provincial capitals and swiftly seized control of Kabul with minimal opposition. The unexpected fall of the city compelled the Pentagon to conduct a hurried evacuation of diplomats, American citizens, and Afghan allies.

Washington has faced substantial criticism for its handling of the evacuation and for leaving behind numerous Afghan individuals who had supported the allied forces.

# Iraq Unveils Ancient Stone Tablet Returned by Italy

BAGHDAD (AFP) – Iraq unveiled on Sunday a 2,800-year-old stone tablet returned by Italy, as the war-ravaged country works to recover from abroad antiquities looted from its territory.

The tablet -- whose text is written in cuneiform, the Babylonian alphabet -- bears the insignia of Shalmaneser III, the Assyrian king who ruled the region of Nimrod, in present-day northern Iraq, from 858 to 823 BC.

The circumstances surrounding the tablet’s arrival in Italy remain unclear, but the Italian authorities handed it over to Iraqi President Abdul Latif Rashid during a visit to Bologna over the past week.

“I would like to thank the Italian officials for their efforts and cooperation in bringing back this piece,” Rashid said during a ceremony Sunday at a Baghdad presidential palace to hand the artifact over to the national museum.

The tablet had arrived in the 1980s in Italy, where it was seized by police, said Laith Majid Hussein, director of Baghdad’s council of antiquities and heritage.

Iraqi Culture Minister Ahmed Fakak al-Badrani said the circumstances behind its discovery were unclear.

“Perhaps (it was found) during archaeological excavations or during work on the Mosul dam,”

Iraq’s biggest built in the 1980s, he said.

He underlined the importance of the piece, “whose cuneiform text is complete”.

Modern Iraq’s territory is the cradle of the Sumerian, Akkadian, Babylonian and Assyrian civilizations, to which humanity owes writing and the first cities.

The country’s antiquities have been the target of looting that increased in the chaos following the U.S.-led invasion of 2003.

“We will continue to work to recover all the archaeological pieces of Iraqi history from abroad,” said the Iraqi president.

“We want to make the national

Iraq Museum one of the best museums in the world, and we will work to do so.”

In May, New York prosecutor Alvin Bragg announced the return of two ancient sculptures to Iraq: a limestone Mesopotamian elephant and an alabaster Sumerian bull from the old city of Uruk.

The figurines, stolen during the Persian Gulf War, were smuggled into New York in the late 1990s, according to the prosecutor’s office.

The bull was part of the private collection of Shelby White, a billionaire philanthropist and Met trustee.

In 2022, two European tourists were killed in shark attacks near Hurghada.

In 2020, a young Ukrainian boy lost an arm and an Egyptian tour guide a leg in a shark attack.

A shark also killed a Czech tourist off a Red Sea beach in 2018. A German tourist was also killed in a similar attack in 2015.

In 2010, various shark attacks killed a European tourist and maimed several others off Sharm El-Sheikh in the Sinai Peninsula across the Red Sea from Hurghada.

## Leader...

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nation, especially in the field of science and technology some parts of which I saw in an exhibition, demonstrate that under the wise guidance of its Leader, a united nation can achieve great goals despite all pressures,” he said.

Earlier in the day, Mirziyoyev and President Raisi oversaw the signing of 10 documents for cooperation in a host of fields.

According to the documents, Iran and Uzbekistan will enhance cooperation in trade, transportation and transit, pharmacology, standards and insurance, the establishment of joint free zones, technology and innovation, as well as agriculture.

Heading a high-ranking politico-economic delegation, Mirziyoyev arrived in Tehran for the first official visit by an Uzbek president in 20 years.

President Raisi said no obstacle can hinder the expansion of the Islamic Republic’s relations with the neighbors.

Addressing a meeting of high-ranking delegations of the two countries, Raisi said the enhancement of Tehran-Tashkent relations would be beneficial to both nations.

The president called for a roadmap for developing comprehensive cooperation between Iran and Uzbekistan and implementing bilateral agreements.

Raisi said Iran’s active and successful participation in the international industrial exhibition in Tashkent in April demonstrated Tehran’s resolve to improve mutual trade and commercial relations.

Pointing to historical and civilizational ties between Iran and Uzbekistan, he said the two countries enjoy capacities for improvement of cooperation.

He said the visit by his Uzbek counterpart to Tehran after 20 years is a major step towards deepening cooperation. The two countries, Raisi said, seek to double trade exchanges at the first phase and then increase them to three billion dollars.

The Iranian president urged both countries to follow up on bilateral agreements in the fields of economy and trade, transportation and transit, science and technology, agriculture, medical and pharmaceutical equipment in order to develop relations and exchange capacities.

Raisi also expressed Iran’s readiness to transfer its experience in various scientific and economic fields to Uzbekistan.

## Mossad...

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The attacks came less than two years after the ethnic cleansing that took place in what Palestinians call the Nakba (catastrophe), which led to the creation of Israel in 1948.

Zionist forces killed 13,000 Palestinians, destroyed and depopulated around 530 villages and towns, committed at least 30 massacres, and expelled 750,000 people during the Nakba.

More than 6,000 Israeli Jews, including 4,000 soldiers and 2,000 civilians, were killed, as well as around 2,000 troops from Arab countries.

Shlaim states in the book that Iraqi Jews did not face antisemitism until the 1940s, when they were suspected of being complicit in the British invasion of Iraq in 1941 and in the Nakba.

He adds that the Zionist project led to Jews from all across Arab countries going from respected fellow citizens to akin to a fifth column allied with the new Jewish entity.

Shlaim discusses how Jews, like himself, who originated from the region faced discrimination from Ashkenazi Jews, who came from Europe.

Mizrahi Israelis remain among some of the poorest communities in Israel, living in developing towns and underprivileged neighborhoods.

Shlaim, who is emeritus professor of international relations at the University of Oxford, later migrated to the United Kingdom as a teenager, returning to Israel temporarily to complete military service.

## Fresh...

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and nine others injured, according to St. Louis Metropolitan Police, who have yet to release more information on the incident.

A state trooper was killed and another was critically injured during two violent encounters with the same armed suspect in central Pennsylvania, the first unfolding near State Police barracks, authorities said.

The suspect, whose name was not immediately released, was fatally shot during a gunfight with the trooper who was killed, according to the Pennsylvania State Police.

The violence began at 12:45 p.m. Saturday when the gunman opened fire on a Pennsylvania state trooper near the State Police barracks in Mifflintown, about 45 miles northwest of Harrisburg, police said.

The suspect fled the scene after shooting the trooper, who was in critical condition at a hospital, according to Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro.

Following an intense three-hour search, state police cornered the suspect in Walker Township, about 50 miles northwest of Mifflintown, according to authorities.

A gunfight broke out between the suspect and another state trooper, authorities said. During the exchange of gunfire in Walker Township, both the suspect and the trooper were killed, officials said.

The name of the trooper who was fatally shot was not immediately released.

A motive for the shootings remained under investigation Sunday.

At least 25 U.S. law enforcement officers have now been shot to death in the line of duty this year, according to the Officer Down Memorial Page. In 2022, a total of 61 U.S. law enforcement officers were killed by gunfire in the line of duty, according to the Officer Down Memorial Page website.

There have been 307 mass shootings in the U.S. in 2023, according to the Gun Violence archive, a nonprofit that tracks incidents and which defines a mass shooting as a single incident in which at least four people — other than the shooter — are shot.

## Martyrdom ...

(Continued From Page One)

*Heir said the mode of Islamic punishment for a habitual thief, according to the genuine laws of the shari'a is that only the four fingers (and that too after due warnings) should be severed, leaving the thumb and the palm intact, since the culprit is after all a human being in need of the mercy of the All-Forgiving God and should not be deprived of the correct way to pray, which requires the touching of 7 organs to the ground including the palms.*

*At this wise and rational judgement, the malice of the caliph and the court-mullahs increased. They plotted the murder of Imam Jawad (AS) through poisoning in the vain hope of giving legitimacy and permanency to the usurper Abbasid dynasty. They succeeded in their sordid plot through the treachery of Mamoon's daughter who was one of the wives of Imam Jawad (actually forced upon him).*

*The 9<sup>th</sup> Imam was laid to rest beside his grandfather Imam Musa al-Kazem (AS) in the magnificent gold-plated twin-domed mausoleum of Kazemain from where he continues to rule the hearts and minds of believers all over the world, while there is no trace today of the Abbasids and their graves, let alone their palaces. "Peace unto you O' the Spring of Wisdom and the Lantern of Light"*

## Raisi ...

(Continued From Page One)

*and Saudi Arabia," he said. "The Zionist regime is not only an enemy of the Palestinians, but a threat to all Muslims."*

*The Iranian president warned that normalization by certain countries with the Zionist regime would in no way enhance security as it goes against the will of Muslim nations.*

*Pointing to the participation of Muslims from across the world in the annual Hajj pilgrimage, the Iranian president said it is necessary, based on Islamic beliefs, to promote good neighborliness between Tehran and Riyadh.*

*He said Muslim nations are suffering from a host of problems in the region. "It is possible to overcome problems through cooperation and dialogue among regional countries and there is no need for foreign intervention to that end."*

*Raisi said Iran has gained sophisticated experience in fighting terrorism and destroying takfiri terrorists, which can be used as an axis of cooperation between Tehran and Riyadh.*

*The Saudi foreign minister, for his part, said Tehran and Riyadh have entered a golden phase in relations.*

*He said cooperation with Iran would prepare the ground for both sides and the region to make use of the current opportunities.*

*Bin Farhan said the Saudi King has ordered the formation of various working groups to promote relations with Iran to a strategic level. Enhancement of economic, development and cultural cooperation is on the agenda of Tehran and Riyadh, he said.*

*The Saudi minister said certain countries in the world do not favor promotion of peace and progress in the region. However, the top Saudi diplomat said, expanded interaction between Iran and Saudi Arabia and among all Muslim nations would guarantee that no foreign country interfere in the region.*

## FM...

(Continued From Page 2)

countries are strategically important. He submitted an invitation from Pakistani Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto for the Iranian foreign minister to visit Pakistan.

Over the recent years, Tehran and Islamabad have been working towards enhancing their relations, especially economic ties and their mutual efforts at combating terrorism in the areas that straddle the common border.

Pakistan was Iran’s fifth largest export market in the previous Iranian calendar year which ended on March 20), importing non-oil products worth \$1.488 billion from Iran.

Iran imported non-oil goods worth \$842 million from Pakistan last year, up 170 percent from the previous year.

# Egypt to Install Monitoring Devices to Track Sharks in Red Sea

CAIRO (Anadolu) – Egypt plans to install monitoring devices to track the movements of sharks following last week’s shark attack in the Red Sea, according to local media.

A 28-year-old Russian tourist was killed after being attacked and dragged under the water by a tiger shark in Hurghada city on June 8.

Following the attack, the Environment Ministry decided to install monitoring devices within days to track the movements of sharks, especially tiger sharks, in the Red Sea, Al-Masry Al-Youm newspaper said, citing sources.

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The move aims to identify the reasons behind shark attacks against diving practitioners, the sources said.

According to the sources, the monitoring devices will be installed in cooperation with a foreign specialist and researchers in the Red Sea reserves.

Egyptian authorities have yet to confirm the move.

Shark attacks have been relatively rare in Egypt’s Red Sea coastal region.