

ISTANBUL (Xinhua/Anadolu) – Turkish gendarmerie has confiscated 198 ancient coins as part of a crackdown on the illicit trade of historical artifacts in the northwestern province of Tekirdag, the Ihlas News Agency reported on Tuesday. The gendarmerie forces acted on a tip-off that two suspects were holding the ancient coins in their possessions, in order to sell them to potential buyers, said the report. In a separate incident, Turkish Customs authorities, on Tuesday, seized 28 pythons from a truck and arrested two people on suspicion of smuggling the dangerous reptiles in north-western Edirne province, Anadolu Agency reports.

An ignorant person will always overdo a thing or neglect it totally.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

Dozens of Pro-Palestinian Groups Oppose UK's Anti-BDS Bill

LONDON (Dispatches) – Dozens of civil society groups have called on the UK government to drop a proposed anti-boycott bill they say is primarily aimed at stopping local councils from supporting the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement opposing the Zionist regime's illegal occupation of Palestinian territories.

The Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) bill, which was presented to parliament on Monday, would prohibit procurement and investment decisions made by public bodies that are "influenced by political or moral disapproval of foreign state conduct".

The bill sets out that the government can "specify a country or territory" for which the bill "does not apply". But the text of the bill, as reported exclusively by MEE last week, explicitly states that such exemptions "may not specify" decisions or considerations "relating specifically or mainly to Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, or the Occupied Golan Heights".

In comments announcing the bill, communities secretary Michael Gove said boycotts of



Founded in 2004, the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement aims to force the Zionist regime to comply with international law and end its illegal occupation of the West Bank

organizations and businesses linked to the Zionist regime had led to "appalling anti-Semitic rhetoric and abuse".

The BDS movement describes itself as an "inclusive, anti-racist human rights movement that is opposed on principle to all forms of discrimination, including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia".

In a joint statement on Monday, major trade unions and pro-Palestine groups described the bill as an affront to freedom of

speech and the rights of workers to show support for Palestine and other causes.

"We are concerned that this [bill] would prevent public bodies from deciding not to invest in or procure from companies complicit in the violation of the rights of the Palestinian people," the statement said.

"We affirm that it is the right of public bodies to do so, and in fact a responsibility to break ties with companies contributing to abuses of rights and violations

of international law in occupied Palestine and anywhere else where such acts occur."

Sharon Graham, head of the Unite union, which represents 1.4 million public sector workers, said the bill was "another assault on workers by a government keen to suppress the right to protest".

Graham criticized the bill's targeting of a pension scheme for local government workers.

Ben Jamal, director of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC), Britain's largest pro-Palestine group, also condemned the proposed boycott legislation and said it was an attack on freedom of expression in the UK.

The head of the Palestinian mission to the UK, Husam Zomlot, called on the UK government to withdraw the legislation, saying: "We are deeply concerned that this has broader implications for Britain's supposed commitment to the global rule-of-law-based order. We view the proposed legislation as yet another sign that the UK is abdicating its historic responsibility for and direct role in creating the plight of the Palestinian people."

UN Chief Tells Zionist Regime to Halt Illegal Settlements in Palestine



The illegal West Bank settlement of Eli

NEW YORK (Dispatches) – United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called on the Zionist regime to immediately "cease all settlement activities" in occupied Palestinian territory, describing the occupying regime's plans to advance the building of settlements as driving "tensions and violence" and being a major obstacle to a lasting peace.

"The Secretary-General reiterates that settlements are a flagrant violation of international law," Farhan Haq, deputy spokesperson for the secretary general, said in a statement on Monday.

"The expansion of these illegal settlements is a significant driver of tensions and violence and deepens humanitarian needs," Haq said.

"It further entrenches Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory, encroaches on Palestinian land and natural resources, hampers the free movement of the Palestinian population, and undermines the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and sovereignty," the UN chief said, according to Haq.

Haq said that Guterres was "deeply troubled" by the regime's decision to amend settlement planning procedures that would speed up plans for new settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Al-Quds, as well as the advancement of more than 4,000 settlement housing units by the re-

gime's planning authorities.

On Sunday, Zionist prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu approved plans for thousands of new housing units in the occupied West Bank, giving the far-right finance minister Bezalel Smotrich sweeping powers to expedite the construction of settlements, which are illegal under international law.

The plans for the approval of 4,560 housing units in various areas of the West Bank have been included on the agenda of the regime's supreme planning council which meets next week.

The occupying regime's settlement expansion appears to put Netanyahu on a collision course with his closest ally, the United States, which said it was "deeply troubled" by the settlement expansion plan and the reports of changes to the processes for planning and approval of settlements on occupied Palestinian land.

Palestinian groups have also expressed deep concerns that the entire West Bank could soon come under the regime's control.

To approve settlement activity is a "dangerous escalation to complete the annexation of the West Bank", the Palestinian foreign ministry said.

Khaled Elgindy, senior fellow at the Washington DC-based Middle East Institute, told Al Jazeera that the UN chief's strong words now need to be backed up with action on the ground.

Saudi Arabia Executes Shia Man Over Trumped-Up Charges

RIYADH (Dispatches) – Saudi authorities have executed a young man from the Shia-populated Qatif region over trumped-up allegations of involvement in terrorist activities, as part of a heavy-handed crackdown led by Saudi Arabia's crown prince against political dissidents.

The Saudi Ministry of Interior announced in a statement that the death sentence was carried out against Muslim bin Ahmed bin Musallam al-Milad.

"Al-Milad, a Saudi national, joined a terrorist cell, which at times got into confrontations with security forces and carried out armed attacks on them," the statement alleged.

The statement claimed that al-Milad has "undermined domestic security," and "traded in firearms and narcotics."

It further alleged that the young man "supported people wanted for armed clashes with security forces, financed terrorism and terrorist acts, and harbored wanted criminals."

The Saudi national was initially referred to the kingdom's Specialized Criminal Court, where he was found guilty of charges leveled against him, and handed down a death sentence, which was upheld on appeal, it added.

Earlier this month, Saudi Arabia announced the execution of

three people in the Shia-populated Eastern Province over fabricated charges.

Hussein bin Ali bin Muhammad al-Mohishi, Fazel bin Zaki bin Hossein Ansif, and Zakaria bin Hassan bin Muhammad al-Mohishi received the death penalty.

Saudi Arabia's oil-rich and predominantly Shia Eastern Province has been the scene of peaceful demonstrations since February 2011.

Protesters demand reforms, freedom of expression, the release of political prisoners, and an end to economic and religious discrimination against the region.

The protests have been met with

a heavy-handed crackdown, with regime forces increasing security measures across the province.

Ever since Mohammed bin Salman became Saudi Arabia's de facto leader in 2017, the kingdom has ramped up arrests of activists, bloggers, intellectuals, and others perceived as political opponents.

It shows almost zero tolerance for dissent even in the face of international condemnations of the crackdown.

As a result, Muslim scholars have been executed and women's rights campaigners have been put behind bars and tortured as freedoms of expression, association, and belief continue to be denied.

Activists Gather Outside UAE's London Embassy to Protest Climate Conference

LONDON (Middle East Eye) – Human rights activists have come together in London to protest against the decision to hold the Cop28 climate conference in the United Arab Emirates.

The event organized by ALQST, which monitors human rights abuses in Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf Arab countries, took place outside the UAE's embassy and was attended by activists from FairSquare, Amnesty International, PEN International and the MENA Solidarity Network. "Having the world climate conference happen in a country that contributes majorly to the climate crisis is just a farce. It renders the event farcical," Julia Legner, executive director of ALQST, told Middle East Eye.

There are concerns that the petrostate's own economic interests will inhibit it from making any real progress in the fight against climate change.

In a speech given at the protest, James Lynch,

founding co-director of FairSquare rights group, said: "The UAE autocracy is funded and fuelled by fossil fuels, so there is an inextricable link between fossil fuels and the autocracy of the UAE. The UAE will fight to keep fossil fuel on the agenda, to preserve its own power."

In a widely criticized move, Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, the CEO of the UAE's national oil company, Adnoc, has been appointed president of this year's summit.

He has been outspoken about the need to phase out emissions from oil and gas production, but has not committed to phasing out the UAE's production and use - something criticized by Amnesty International.

Experts at Climate Action Tracker, an independent scientific project, have concluded that the UAE's plan for an increase in fossil fuel production and consumption is inconsistent with limiting global heating to 1.5 degrees Celsius above

pre-industrial levels, the overarching goal of the 2016 Paris Agreement.

Monday's protest not only focused on the UAE's climate policies, but also its poor human rights record.

The event started by marking the two-year anniversary of Alaa al-Siddiq's death in a road accident. She was ALQST's former executive director and a prominent Emirati human rights defender.

Her father, Mohammed al-Siddiq, remains detained in the UAE despite his prison term having expired in April 2022. He was convicted as part of a 2013 trial dubbed the "UAE 94", which saw 94 lawmakers, professors, activists and students who had petitioned for democratic reforms tried for plotting to overthrow the government.

The event then ended with the handing over of a petition to the embassy in support of prisoners of conscience still being held in the UAE.

Several Killed, Injured in Turkey Drone Attack in Syria

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – Several people have been killed and injured after Turkey carried out a drone attack on northern Syria.

Turkey targeted a region in Hasakah in the northeast of Syria, according to the reports.

Three people were killed and one other was injured following the drone attack.

Meanwhile, sources affiliated with the opposition reported that a vehicle belonging to the US-backed SDF forces was targeted in northern Hasakah.

Syrian sources reported that Turkey has attacked the U.S.-affiliated SDF forces in the north and northeast of Syria 25 times since the beginning of 2023.

Turkey has deployed its troops in areas of northern Iraq and Syria to fight PKK terrorists and is conducting aerial attacks on parts

of the northern areas of these countries.

Ankara has received widespread criticism from both Iraqi and Kurdish authorities in Baghdad and Erbil as well as the international community for violating Iraqi sovereignty under the pretext of fighting the PKK.

In a separate incident, Iraqi news sources on Tuesday reported that a Turkish drone crashed in the northern parts of Iraq.

An Iraqi security source announced that a Bayraktar drone crashed in the Qandil mountains in Sulaymaniyah province located in the Iraqi Kurdistan region.

The Qandil Mountains are a mountainous area of the Kurdistan Region near the Iraq-Iran border.

The cause of the drone's crash is not clear yet and the investigations in this regard are ongoing.