

Lebanon Stops Zionist Breach Attempt at Blue Line

BEIRUT 5 (Dispatches) – The Lebanese army on Wednesday stopped a bulldozer backed by Zionist troops from breaching the Blue Line by digging the “technical fence” along the border with the occupied territories, the National News Agency (NNA) reported.

The bulldozer was attempting to dig the road in the Karkazan area in the town of Mays el-Jabal but was forced by the Lebanese army to retreat, according to the NNA report.

A patrol of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon arrived and documented the breach, the report said.

The occupying regime built the “technical fence” with electrified wires along the 79-km border with Lebanon in 2001, about 50 meters south of the Blue Line, a demarcation line between Lebanon and the occupied territories published by the United Nations in 2000.

The Lebanese border has been mostly quiet since the occupying regime fought a month-long war with Hezbollah in 2006.

Citing local media sources, Anadolu reported that the Zionist



A Lebanese protester plants the national flag across the fence from an Israeli tank during an anti-Israeli demonstration near the Lebanese southern village of Kfar Chouba on June 9, 2023.

regimes has informed Lebanon’s Hezbollah resistance movement during the Eid Al-Adha holiday that it does not want war and does not intend to forcibly remove a military outpost set up by the movement on the southern border of the Israeli-occupied Shebaa Farms.

The communication was sent through the U.S. ambassador to

Lebanon, Dorothy Shea.

According to the official Israeli channel Kan on 21 June, Hezbollah set up an armed military site [two tents] in the Dov Mountain sector of the occupied Shebaa Farms.

On Tuesday, the Lebanese Al-Akhar newspaper, which is close to Hezbollah, said, “Last month was full of international mediation

at the request of the Israeli enemy to resolve the crisis caused by the presence of the two tents.” Following the delivery of the message to the group, it added, Ambassador Shea requested an urgent meeting with Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati to inform him of Tel Aviv’s message.

Shea explained during the meeting that the Biden administration urges the Lebanese government to reach an understanding between the army leadership and the international emergency forces to address the issue of the tents.

There was no comment from the U.S. Embassy in Beirut or Hezbollah about the report. A Lebanese government source refused to comment to Anadolu about it.

“Any Israeli action to remove the two tents, whatever its level, will cost a war,” warned the head of Hezbollah’s parliamentary bloc, Muhammad Raad, on Saturday.

Israel’s Channel 12 reported on Sunday the possibility of an “escalation” in light of Hezbollah’s refusal to remove the two tents from the occupied Lebanese territory.

OIC Calls for Art, Media Productions to Combat Islamophobia



Demonstrators protest against Islamophobia in Birmingham, in 2017.

ANKARA (Anadolu/Al Jazeera) – The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has called on member states to sponsor art and media productions with a view to combating Islamophobia and insults against religious symbols.

The move aims “to clarify and strengthen the tolerant principles of Islam calling for coexistence, tolerance and respect for the other and renouncing violence, intolerance and hatred,” Information Department Director Wajdi Ali Sindi told an emergency meeting of the OIC States Broadcasting Union (OSBU).

The meeting discussed mechanisms of confronting desecration of religious sanctities in the media in the wake of last week’s burning of Islam’s holy book, the Qur’an, in Sweden.

Sindi said the OIC is working with its partners “to enhance understanding of the responsible use of freedom of expression in the media, and to establish national mechanisms to hold accountable the media that continue to feed hate speech and intolerance, and implementing the OIC media strategy to combat Islamophobia.”

Last week, a person identified as Salwan Momika burned a copy of the Qur’an under police protection

in front of Stockholm Mosque.

The criminal act triggered widespread condemnations across the Arab and Muslim countries amid calls for Sweden to put an end of such acts against Islamic symbols.

The United Nations Human Rights Council will hold an urgent meeting on the burning of Qur’an, following a request from Pakistan.

The debate on the rise of religious hatred will likely take place later this week, a spokesperson for the Geneva-based UN council told a press briefing on Tuesday.

The Swedish government condemned the “Islamophobic” act after the OIC called for measures to avoid future desecration of the Muslim holy book.

Officials from numerous countries, including many in the Middle East, have also reacted to the incident, calling on Stockholm to step up measures against religious hate.

Morocco went beyond a statement of condemnation and recalled its ambassador to Sweden for an indefinite period.

Meanwhile, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said: “We will teach the arrogant Western people that it is not freedom of expression to insult the sacred values of Muslims.”

Egypt Gets Stolen Fragment of Ancient Statue From Switzerland

CAIRO (MEMO) – Switzerland has returned to Egypt a fragment of a 3,400-year-old statue of the pharaoh Ramses II, which was stolen more than 30 years ago. This “important archaeological asset” was handed over to the Egyptian Embassy in Bern by Carine Bachmann, director of the Swiss Federal Office of Culture (FOC).

According to reports, the piece had been confiscated in Geneva during criminal proceedings and handed back to Egypt under Switzerland’s law covering the international transfer of cultural property. Both countries are contracting parties to the UNESCO Convention of 1970 on the Measures to Prohibit and Prevent the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.

“The stone sculpture of the Egyptian pharaoh Ramses II belongs to a group of statues in which the king is seated next to various ancient Egyptian deities,” explained the FOC. “The fragment was stolen from the

Temple of Ramses II at Abydos, Egypt, between the late 1980s and early 1990s. It apparently then went through various stations abroad before it was finally introduced to Switzerland.”

The restitution of the artefact, added the FOC, underscores the joint commitment of Switzerland and Egypt in combating the illegal transfer of cultural property. “This was further strengthened in 2011 with the entry into force of a bilateral agreement on the import and repatriation of cultural property.”

Ramses II, also known as Ramses the Great, was one of ancient Egypt’s most celebrated pharaohs. Born in 1303 BCE, he ascended to the throne aged 25 and reigned for a remarkable 66 years, making him one of the longest-ruling pharaohs in history. He is best known for his architectural achievements, particularly the construction of the temples at Abu Simbel, and was renowned for his diplomatic skills.

UN Urges Extension of Turkey Border Crossing Into Syria for One Year

IDLIB (AP) – The UN secretary general is hoping that the Security Council will vote later this month to keep a key border crossing from Turkey to Syria’s militant-held northwest open for critical aid deliveries for a period of one year instead of six months, a UN official said Tuesday.

Syria’s northwestern province of Idlib is home to some 4 million people, many of whom were earlier displaced during the 12-year foreign-backed war, which has killed nearly half a million people. Hundreds of thousands live in tent settlements and rely on aid that comes through the Bab al-Hawa border crossing.

The Security Council is expected to vote in the coming days, as

the current six-month opening period expires on July 10.

The situation got worse after the Feb. 6 earthquake that hit southern Turkey and northern Syria, killing tens of thousands of people and leaving many more homeless and in need of aid.

In the past, Russia, the main backer of Syrian President Bashar Assad, abstained on or vetoed resolutions on cross-border aid deliveries. It has sought to replace aid crossing the Turkish border to Idlib province with convoys from government-held areas in Syria. Since the early years of the war in Syria, Turkey has sided with and supported the militants.

The Security Council initially

authorized aid deliveries in 2014 from Turkey, Iraq and Jordan through four crossing points into militant-held areas in Syria. But over the years, Russia, backed by its ally China, has reduced the authorized crossings to just one from Turkey — and the time frame from a year to six months.

“The UN Secretary-General has been very clear that he would like the Security Council to renew the cross-border resolution which expires on July 10 for 12 months,” said David Carden, the UN’s Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for Syria. He spoke to journalists during a visit to Idlib.

He said a 12-month renewal was needed in order for the UN

to implement early recovery projects such as durable shelters. “What we want is to get people from tents into durable shelter,” he said adding that such shelters are cooler in summer and warmer in winter, in addition to the privacy they give to families.

The February earthquake left more than 4,500 dead in northwestern Syria and about 855,000 people had their homes damaged or destroyed, according to the UN.

After the earthquake, two additional border crossings between Turkey and Syria were opened initially for three months. They were extended for a further three months in May to help the flow of aid.

Report Finds ‘Deliberate Mass Killings’ of Ethiopians Along Saudi-Yemen Border

RIYADH (Middle East Eye) – Ethiopian migrant workers are being systematically targeted and killed on a daily basis by Saudi security officials trying to deter people from crossing the Saudi-Yemen border.

According to a new report by the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC), an international network carrying out research and analysis on migration, the Ethiopians have been targeted by snipers and mortars.

Bram Frouws, the director of MMC, says the situation is ongoing and critical.

“Sexual abuse, including rape, is widespread,” he told Middle East Eye.

“There is physical violence, torture, arbitrary detention - all speak of being shot at, with people dying around them at the northern border between Saudi Arabia and Yemen.”

The Saudi-Yemen border has become particularly dangerous in recent years, with around 430 deaths and 650 injuries recorded between 1 Janu-

ary and 30 April 2022.

The killings and attacks on the Ethiopians took place on the route between al-Jawf and Sadah in Yemen. Attacks have also been taking place in the Jizan province of Saudi Arabia.

One survivor told MMC last month that they were disturbed by “the pungent smell” of dead bodies. Another said “when the security camera catches you, the border guards fire heavy explosives”.

The United Nations has previously highlighted the issue. In October 2022, several special rapporteurs highlighted the killings in a letter, describing “gross human rights violations against migrants”.

Data compiled by the UN states that 30 percent of the victims were reportedly women, and that seven percent were children.

The letter also stated that some of the abuses included torture, arbitrary detention, trafficking and sexual abuse.

The Saudi-Yemen border has become a major transit point for people between the Horn of Africa and Saudi Arabia.

Many refugees and migrants rely on networks of traffickers to help them travel along the route, leaving them vulnerable to violence.

The migrants attempting to cross the border are primarily from Ethiopia.

Humanitarian assistance has been limited in the area, with medical personnel unable to reach those injured.

Those injured also struggle to get treatment, with only one hospital located in a remote area, which is difficult to reach.

Women and young girls are particularly vulnerable at the crossing, with a high risk of sexual violence.

According to Frouws the majority of victims are men, though there is a growing number of female victims.