

Syria Ready to Receive Ill People From Militant-Held Areas

DAMASCUS (Xinhua) – The Syrian military stood ready to open crossings for patients from militant-held regions to seek medical treatment in government-controlled areas, Syria's pro-government al-Watan newspaper reported Sunday.

Citing Idlib Governor Thar Salhab, it reported that the government forces would open the crossings for cancer patients, including children, and other people with chronic diseases.

His remarks came after media reports circulating in militant-held areas in the northern provinces of Aleppo and Idlib about the deteriorating medical situation of people who had chronic illnesses and failed to receive proper treatment, some of whom even crossed the



Children play at an internally displaced person camp bordering Turkey in militant-held Idlib region, northern Syria, July 6, 2023.

border into a neighboring country to seek medical help.

"We have received many appeals from some people on this issue,

and the state is responsible and has a duty to provide treatment to any Syrian citizen on any part of the territory of Syria, and there is

no difference between Syrian citizens, whether they live in or outside the government-controlled areas," he said.

Still, Salhab added that there was a shortage of medical personnel in Idlib, saying that a request was made for the rehabilitation of the Maarat al-Numan hospital in the namesake city to make the process of offering medical care easier.

Last week, the Ministry of Health issued a statement saying it was "following with great concern" the health conditions of people in northern Syria, especially children and women.

Meanwhile, war monitor the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said some 3,000 cancer patients are in need of urgent medical help in northern Syria.

Crisis... (Continued From Page One)

those things shared by Israeli society, is tearing the people apart, disintegrating the IDF and inflicting fatal blows on Israel's security," the former officials wrote.

Israel Katz, a senior cabinet minister from Netanyahu's Likud party, said the bill would pass one way or another on Monday.

After seven straight months of the most sustained and intense demonstrations the occupied territories have ever seen, the grassroots protest movement has reached a fever pitch.

The parliament is expected to vote Monday on a measure that would limit the supreme court's oversight powers by preventing judges from striking down Netanyahu's decisions on the basis that they are "unreasonable."

Critics say that removing the standard, which is invoked only in rare cases, would allow the regime to pass arbitrary decisions, make improper appointments or firings and open the door to corruption.

Netanyahu has already been indicted over fraud, corruption and breach of trust.

Monday's vote would mark the first major piece of legislation to be approved.

The overhaul also calls for other sweeping changes aimed at curbing the powers of the judiciary, from limiting the supreme court's ability to challenge parliamentary decisions, to changing the way judges are selected.

Protesters, who make up a wide swath of the occupied entity, see the overhaul as a power grab fueled by various personal and political grievances by Netanyahu, who is on trial for corruption charges, and his partners, who want to deepen Israel's control of the occupied West Bank and perpetuate controversial draft exemptions for ultra-Orthodox men.

In a speech Thursday, Netanyahu doubled down on the overhaul and dismissed the accusations that the plan would destroy the Zionist entity.

Alarmed by the growing mass of reservists refusing to serve, war minister Yoav Gallant pushed for a delay in Monday's vote, according to reports in Israeli media. It was unclear if others would join him.

On Sunday, former Israeli soldiers raised an "extraordinary alert" over the "deep fracture" in the military caused by the ongoing judicial crisis.

In a joint statement, the veterans said the situation is far worse than what the army leadership has described and is now affecting active-duty soldiers.

"A dramatic split like this cannot remain behind closed doors," the soldiers, who previously served in various elite army units, said in the statement reported on Israeli media.

The veterans' statement on Sunday warned that soldiers' protests have now extended beyond reservists and is affecting active-duty soldiers.

"We've heard from our units in recent weeks and days about a growing and concrete desire among (at least) dozens of active noncommissioned officers to stop (or at least not extend) their contracts," the former soldiers said.

"The numbers are growing every day. The situation is far graver than what the heads of the military are describing."

Earlier on Sunday, opposition MP and former war minister Benny Gantz said that some of the damage done to the military amid the protests "is already irreparable".

Herzi Halevi, the army's chief of staff, wrote a letter to soldiers on Sunday, saying "no one has the right to say that they are no longer serving, and all of us do not have the right not to report for duty or to refuse an order."

The crisis comes to a head as Netanyahu was fitted with a pacemaker early Sunday after he was rushed to hospital hours before a key debate on his plan.

Doctors said Netanyahu, 73, would remain at the Sheba Medical Center in Tel Aviv for observation.

Netanyahu had been admitted "because of what we call transit heart block," Professor Eyal Nof said in YouTube video posted by the medical center.

He added a heart monitor, which was implanted in Netanyahu just over a week ago when he was rushed to hospital with dehydration, had alerted them to the problem.

The data indicated that Netanyahu needed an "urgent pacemaker implantation," Nof's colleague, Professor Roy Beinart, said in the same video.

The prime minister's office said that so-called justice minister Yariv Levin would stand in for him while he was under sedation. However, the weekly cabinet meeting scheduled for Sunday morning was postponed and two upcoming overseas trips, to Cyprus and Turkey, were being rescheduled, Netanyahu's office said.

The crisis at the heart of Israel is clearly deeper than that in the heart of the regime's

prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman said Sunday.

"There are reports that doctors have implanted a pacemaker in the heart of the prime minister of the Zionist regime," Nasser Kanaani wrote in a tweet.

Still, he added, it is clear that "the crisis at the heart of the Zionist regime is deeper than the crisis in the heart of its prime minister."

Blood... (Continued From Page One)

the main thing that makes it a scandal.

"Despite the Government's warnings we may not get that transparency even now – that is the fear.

"The transparency we would like to have is with the various ministers who are giving evidence next week to say 'this is what we have been doing, these are the recommendations we are prepared to accept and this is the timetable for when it is going to happen'.

"We would like just some clear answers rather than the line that they give which is 'we are working at pace'."

A government spokesman said: "The government accepts the moral case for compensation and work is ongoing across the UK Government and in consultation with the devolved administrations to consider as quickly as possible the recommendations put forward in the inquiry's second interim report."

Raisi... (Continued From Page 2)

desecration of Islam's holiest book and proposed that Muslim countries hold an extraordinary session as soon as possible.

Pointing to "brotherly and strategic" relation between Iran and Turkey, Amir-Abdollahian invited his Turkish counterpart to pay a visit to Tehran.

The top Iranian diplomat said Tehran is ready to host a session of a joint economic committee.

Fidan, for his part, welcomed his Iranian counterpart's proposal about an emergency session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) foreign ministers to discuss the acts of sacrilege against the Holy Qur'an.

The Turkish foreign minister said he would travel to Tehran in the near future.

The top Iranian and Turkish diplomats also exchanged views about leading regional and international issues.

Regional... (Continued From Page 2)

authorities, saying the necessary arrangements had to be made to implement the agreements reached.

Bin Zayed, for his part, strongly condemned the sacrilege of divine books, religions and religious beliefs, and welcomed the Iranian foreign minister's proposal for a ministerial meeting of the OIC member states.

The Emirati foreign minister also described Amir-Abdollahian's recent trip to the UAE as "very important" and called for the enhancement of cooperation between Abu Dhabi and Tehran in all fields.

Air... (Continued From Page 2)

Iran's armed forces hold routine military exercises throughout the year.

Iranian officials have repeatedly underscored that the country will not hesitate to strengthen its military capabilities, including its missile power, which are entirely meant for defense, and that Iran's defense capabilities will be never subject to negotiations.

Yemen Says Won't Transfer Oil Revenues to Saudi Bank

SANA'A (Dispatches) – Sana'a has rejected a proposal by Riyadh to transfer oil and gas revenues to the Saudi National Bank in return for the kingdom to pay public sector wages in Yemen.

Mahdi al-Mashat, the head of Yemen's Supreme Political Council, blamed the U.S. for the hurdles created by Saudi Arabia in paying salaries of civil servants in the areas controlled by the Ansarullah movement, Yemen's al-Masirah television network reported on Sunday.

"What the Saudis want is to loot our oil wealth, transfer it to the Saudi National Bank, and give charity money to our employees, something that is dismissed," he said.

"God willing, we will try to pay the salaries in the future and we will win them back from the enemy."

Mashat also urged Washington not to make enemies among more than 10 million Yemeni public sector workers by preventing the payment of their wages.

Earlier, Riyadh proposed to pay the salaries of Yemeni civil servants for one year in Saudi Riyals in exchange for the extension of a ceasefire and the resumption of Yemeni oil exports.

Yemen, however, wants to restore control over its own resources, saying the country's oil revenues are enough to pay the salaries of all public sector workers.

Saudi Arabia, in collaboration with its Arab allies and with arms and logistics support

from the U.S. and other Western states, launched a devastating war on Yemen in March 2015. It also imposed the most severe siege on Yemen, weakening the country's economy.

Riyadh sought to crush Ansarullah and reinstall the Riyadh-friendly regime of Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi, but it failed to do achieve its objective.

The war, meanwhile, has killed hundreds of thousands of Yemenis and spawned the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

UN Agency Raises Alarm Over Refugee Relief in Jordan

AMMAN (Arab News) – The UNHCR has warned of "serious consequences" for refugees in Jordan if no adequate funding is added to its shrinking budget.

The UN refugee agency has issued a recent appeal calling for "immediate" assistance after other agencies announced plans to reduce health services and food help in camps in Jordan.

Jordanian government-owned Al-Mamlakah TV commented on a UNHCR report which said that the

UN refugee agency had only received 32 percent of its financial needs for 2023, or "\$125.7 million of its annual budget of \$390.11 million."

In light of this 68 percent deficit, Dominik Bartsch, the agency's representative to Jordan, has warned of a "humanitarian crisis and serious consequences for refugees and host communities."

He added: "The current lack of funding for the refugee response is undermining the great achievements made in over a decade."

He said that there was growing concern that Jordan's ability to include refugees in healthcare and education systems might be eroded.

"Sustained support over the years has allowed Syrian refugees to access the labor market," Bartsch said.

"Now, there is an imminent risk that the situation is sliding back into a humanitarian crisis, with serious consequences for refugees and host communities."

Bartsch praised Jordanian efforts in past years in giving

assistance to refugees.

The country issued a record 62,000 work permits to Syrians in 2021, according to UNHCR.

This was a result of the international community committing funding and expanded trade facilitation under the Jordan Compact, an initiative to improve access to education and legal employment for Syrians.

Bartsch called for a "determined and coordinated action ... to keep the success story in Jordan alive."

Palestinian Women Working to Save Gaza's Fishing Industry

GAZA STRIP (Middle East Eye) – Instead of waiting for her fisherman husband to finish his day off the Gaza coast, Mona Hneideq now works alongside him. He catches the fish, while she creates and makes delicious dishes with them.

Along with 19 other women, Hneideq has opened the Fishermen's Wives Seafood Kitchen, near the seaport of Deir al-Balah, in the central Gaza Strip. There, the women support their husbands, whose work in the fishing industry faces ever tighter restrictions from the Zionist regime.

"They go fishing early in the morning, and once they are back, we take the catch and make different dishes based on customers' orders," Hneideq, 36, told Middle East Eye as she cleaned the fish.

"We prepare the meals, wrap them, and then deliver them to different districts of the Gaza Strip... We complete our husbands and help them overcome the challenges."

Hneideq decided to support her husband after 14 years of marriage, during which she witnessed him come close to giving up fishing

many times.

"He felt desperate and hopeless on many occasions, and he was about to give up on his profession. He and his fellow fishermen get chased by Israeli gunboats almost every day.

"The occupation [forces] open fire towards them, threaten to detain them, confiscate their boats and limit the fishing zone regularly," she said.

"This has made fishing sometimes not worth the effort. There are many days when he would come back home after a long day of fishing without earning anything. But there were also days when he would make up for it."

Before they started the project, the feelings of hopelessness that had overwhelmed Hneideq's husband meant he thought it would fail.

Although the majority of the 20 women working in the kitchen are wives of fishermen, there are also daughters looking to support their seagoing fathers.

Growing up in a family deeply rooted in the fishing industry, Hanan al-Aqraa learned to make seafood recipes from a very young age.

"I remember when I was a child, I used to come to the seaport where my father worked. I brought him food and tea and watched him fishing for hours," she told MEE.

The 29-year-old has a degree in English literature. Since her graduation, she has only done work connected to this degree for a couple of months.

The unemployment rate in the blockaded Gaza Strip, which has been described by human rights groups as an "open-air prison", reached 45 percent at the end of 2022, compared to 13 percent in the West Bank, according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS).

Among youth graduates (19-29 years old) holding an intermediate diploma or higher, the unemployment rate in Gaza had reached 74 percent, compared to 29 percent in the West Bank.

The kitchen's project is supported by a non-governmental organization, the Economic and Social Development Centre of Palestine, as part of an initiative to improve fishermen's income and support their families.