

FRANKFURT (Reuters) – German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius has cancelled a planned trip to Iraq and Jordan, a ministry spokesperson said on Sunday, citing security concerns after the Swedish Embassy in Baghdad was set alight last week in a protest over Qur'an burnings. On Saturday, several thousand Iraqis demonstrated in Baghdad over the recent burning or damaging of the Qur'an during anti-Islam protests in Sweden and Denmark. The cancellation of Pistorius' trip, which was supposed to last for several days, was also in response to protests against a Danish non-governmental organization in Iraq, the spokesperson said.

During civil disturbance adopt such an attitude that people do not attach any importance to you they neither burden you with complicated affairs, nor try to derive any advantage out of you.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

U.S. Military Continues to Plunder Syrian Resources

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – As part of Washington's attempts to further plunder oil reserves and natural resources in Syria, U.S. military has dispatched truckloads of ammunition and logistical equipment to the country's northeastern province of Hasakah.

The Arabic service of Russia's Sputnik news agency, citing local sources, reported that a convoy of 30 trucks, carrying logistical equipment, fuel and ammunition, crossed the Waleed border crossing on Saturday and headed toward U.S. positions in the province.

The sources added that the convoy drove toward illegal U.S. military bases in the countryside of Hasakah, especially the base set up at al-Jibshah oilfields in the town of al-Shaddadi.

The development comes only a few days after 39 U.S. military tankers rumbled through the al-Mahmoudiya border crossing and headed toward Iraq's northern



A convoy of U.S. armored vehicles patrols the northeastern Syrian town of Qahtaniyah at the border with Turkey.

semi-autonomous Kurdistan region after being filled with Syrian crude oil.

The U.S. military has stationed forces and equipment in northeastern Syria, with the Pentagon claiming the deployment is aimed at preventing the oilfields in the area from falling into the hands of

Daesh terrorists.

Damascus, however, maintains that the unauthorized U.S. deployment is aimed at plundering the country's rich mineral resources.

Earlier this month, a senior Russian diplomat lashed out at the persisting illegal presence of U.S. military forces in Syria, demand-

ing that the Pentagon end its illegitimate occupation of the Arab nation's energy- and mineral-rich regions.

"Washington uses the pretext of combating terrorism to be present east of the Euphrates in economically important areas, where crude oil and strategic natural reserves are abundant," Mikhail Bogdanov, the Russian president's special representative for the Middle East and Africa, said in an interview with al-Arabiya television news network published on July 18.

He added U.S. troops are deployed at the al-Tanf area in southern Syria, which marks a flagrant violation of the country's sovereignty and its territorial integrity.

Bogdanov also censured U.S. support in the terror-ravaged country for the anti-Damascus Kurdish-led militants affiliated with the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in northern Syria.

Former Afghan Pilot Complains of Abandonment in UK



A member of parliament walks past Afghan asylum seeker Abdullah Hamdard as he sits outside the entrance to Parliament Hill in an effort to bring his family to Canada from Afghanistan, in Ottawa, Friday, June 9, 2023.

LONDON (Arab News) – U.S. senators have joined calls for a former Afghan pilot to be granted sanctuary after he was left in "legal limbo" by the UK, The Independent has reported.

The veteran, who aided the British Armed Forces in combat missions, arrived in the UK via a small boat last year, but has been threatened with deportation to Rwanda, which means his asylum application cannot progress.

Following the warnings over his potential deportation, the man — whose family is still in hiding in Afghanistan — turned to the U.S. for assistance.

His appeal was met with support by two serving U.S. senators, who have said that Afghans who aided the Western-led intervention should be granted asylum and permission to begin new lives.

Republican Sen. Thom Tillis said that he believed Afghans arriving in the U.S. would be vetted correctly.

He said: "I think many of those things worked themselves out and we still owe them. I believe we owe it to those who serve alongside our men and women and our NATO partners and allies to get them where they want to be."

Sen. Amy Klobuchar told The Independent that Afghans who "helped our military literally are holding letters from top military people saying that they saved their lives and they should not be in legal limbo."

The former pilot has said he feels "abandoned" by the UK Home Office, which is responsible for processing his asylum claim and overseeing his po-

tential deportation to Rwanda.

As part of his appeal to the U.S., the veteran has already completed an initial interview with immigration authorities covering relocation terms.

He said of the UK: "At the moment I feel like it doesn't matter who you are, or what you did with the allies, troops or partner countries."

"Right now I hear lots of Afghan diplomats, military generals, and others. They are saying that the government doesn't care about us, who we are and what we did with them. I think the government is not seeing us as colleagues."

The pilot expressed his frustration over the continued threat of deportation, with his removal notice being maintained despite the UK's Court of Appeal ruling that the Rwanda returns agreement is illegal.

He said: "I don't know why they haven't removed the notice. I am scared they are still trying to send people to Rwanda and, of course, I am worried about what they will do next. Lately, I am completely disappointed in the UK government."

The policy of the U.S. regarding Afghan veteran colleagues saw former interpreters and soldiers arrive in the country on temporary humanitarian grounds.

But a bipartisan senatorial group is attempting to push through a law that would see the Afghan veterans be granted permanent residency on the grounds that they aided the Western-led troops.

Int'l Recognition of Turkey's Independence Marks 100 Years

ANKARA (Anadolu) – A century ago, on July 24, countries around the world acknowledged Turkey as an independent and sovereign nation with the historic signing of the Lausanne Peace Treaty at the Rumine Palace in the lakeside Swiss city.

Months of intense negotiations had led up to the momentous event under the Lausanne Peace Conference, held at the Beau-Rivage Palace Hotel, situated on the picturesque shores of Lake Lemman in Lausanne.

In a book commemorating the hotel's 150 years of history, numerous details about the momentous conference are revealed, shedding light on why Switzerland was chosen as the venue, the intricacies of the negotiations, and the ultimate international recognition of a new nation.

The Lausanne Peace Conference commenced in November 1922.

The book, released by the hotel, explains that Lausanne was selected as the venue through a process of elimination.

"The Turks wanted the conference to take place in Smyrna (Izmir), which they had just liberated from the Greek army, but this was out of the question. London and Paris were also excluded since Britain and France have widely diverging views on the issues to be discussed. Venice was ruled out as it would have given Italy's new dictator Mussolini a golden opportunity to act as chair," it explained.

Geneva, despite being home to the League of Nations, the predecessor of the UN, was vetoed by the U.S. and Soviet Union, "powerful political ob-

servers of the negotiations," according to the book.

Eventually, Britain proposed Lausanne, and it was preferred over the Turkish side's suggestion of another Swiss city, Lugano.

During the conference, the Beau-Rivage Palace Hotel played host to the British, Japanese, Turkish, and American delegations. The French and Italians were accommodated at the Lausanne Palace, while the Greeks stayed at the Hotel Savoy.

"While some of the participating nations came to Lausanne with the aim of dismantling the Ottoman Empire, and redrawing the map of Asia Minor, the conference had a quite different, and unexpected outcome: the birth, and international recognition of a new country, Tur-

key," the book said.

The official delegates, numbering 184, were joined by numerous press correspondents, guest speakers, and support personnel involved in the conference's day-to-day operations.

The book describes the conference's rhythm as akin to that of World War I, oscillating between negotiations, crises, and conflicts. Ultimately, the Turkish victory marked a significant turning point in the numerous revisions of the previous Treaty of Versailles, as one of the nations defeated in 1918 reasserted itself on the world stage.

After talks were adjourned indefinitely in January 1923, they resumed in April of the same year and concluded in July, solidifying the Lausanne Peace Treaty.

UN: Salvage Team Set to Begin Siphoning Oil Out of Rusting Tanker Moored Off Yemen

CAIRO (AP) – An international team is set to begin siphoning oil out of the hull of a decrepit tanker moored off the coast of Yemen this week, a UN official said Sunday. It will mark the first concrete step in an operation years in the making aimed at preventing a massive oil spill in the Red Sea.

More than 1.1 million barrels of oil stored in the tanker, known as SOF Safer, will be transferred to another vessel the United Nations purchased as a replacement to the rusting storage tanker, said Achim Steiner, administrator of the UN development program.

"We have reached a critical stage in this salvage operation," Steiner told The Associated Press hours after the salvage team

on Saturday managed to moor the replacement vessel alongside the Safer tanker in the Red Sea. "This marks, in a sense, the completion of the month-long preparatory phase."

The rusting tanker is a Japanese-made vessel built in the 1970s and sold to the Yemeni government in the 1980s to store up to 3 million barrels of export oil pumped from fields in Marib, a province in eastern Yemen. The ship is 360 meters (1,181 feet) long with 34 storage tanks.

The tanker is moored 6 kilometers (3.7 miles) from Yemen's western Red Sea ports of Hudaydah and Ras Issa.

The vessel has not been maintained for eight years, and its structural integrity is

compromised, making it at risk of breaking up or exploding. Seawater had entered the engine compartment of the tanker, causing damage to the pipes and increasing the risk of sinking, according to internal documents obtained by the AP in June 2020.

For years, the UN and other governments as well as environmental groups have warned that a major oil spill — or explosion — could disrupt global commercial shipping through the vital Bab el-Mandeb and Suez Canal routes, causing untold damage to the global economy. The tanker carries four times as much as the oil that spilled in the 1989 Exxon Valdez disaster off Alaska, one of the world's worst ecological catastrophes, according to the UN.

Dozens Killed, Missing in Flash Floods in Afghanistan

KABUL (Xinhua) – The number of flood-related casualties in eastern Afghan Wardak province has increased to 26 deaths, with 44 people injured, said Shafiqullah Rahimi, spokesman for the Natural Disaster Management Authority on Sunday.

"A total of 26 people were killed, 44 others injured, and 36 more people went missing in rainstorms and flooding that swept through parts of eastern Wardak province late Saturday," Rahimi told reporters.

Rahimi confirmed that the rainstorms and flash floods had also claimed four lives in the Paghman district outside Kabul and another in the eastern Khost province over the past three days.

At least 250 cattle have been killed, 400 houses were partially or utterly destroyed, and dozens of acres of land were submerged in floods, the official asserted.

The provincial governor's office also said in a statement that hundreds of homes had been damaged or destroyed and the missing people

were believed to be under the rubble of collapsed homes.

It added that hundreds of hectares of agricultural land were washed out and destroyed and the floods closed the highway between the capital Kabul and the central Bamiyan province.

Afghanistan lies on the western edge of the Asian monsoon footprint, leading to flash floods to happen regularly every year during the wet season as heavy rain courses down dry riverbeds.

Last year in Afghanistan, the death toll from flooding after the annual monsoon reached 192 people.

The vast extent of death and damage prompted the ruling Taliban to appeal for aid from the international community.

Following the Taliban takeover in August 2021, Afghanistan has been largely cut off from international aid.

The lack of sufficient funding plunged the poverty-stricken nation into dire economic straits.