

Two Zionists Killed by Palestinian Fighter in Retaliatory Op

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – Two Zionists have been shot dead south of Nablus in the occupied West Bank by a Palestinian fighter in a retaliation attack.

The occupying regime's ambulance service said two men – ages 60 and 29 – were shot near the Palestinian village of Huwara. Paramedics said the two people were targeted inside a carwash.

"Both were unconscious and had sustained gunshot wounds to their bodies," a spokesperson for the ambulance service said.

The occupying regime's army spokesperson for Arabic media, Avichay Adraee, confirmed the two had been killed.

The situation in the West Bank has been particularly volatile over the past 15 months with stepped up deadly Zionist raids and rampages by settlers on Palestinian villages.

Earlier on Saturday, a Palestinian man shot by Zionist troops during a raid this week in the occupied West Bank died, the official Palestinian news agency and a health worker said.

Mohammed Abu Asaab was "seriously injured in the head" on Wednesday in Balata refugee camp on the outskirts of the northern



Zionist troops inspect a Palestinian Red Crescent ambulance at a checkpoint following an attack near the West Bank town of Huwwara on 19 August 2023.

West Bank city of Nablus, and on Saturday succumbed to his wounds, news agency Wafa reported.

It said Abu Asaab was hit during clashes that erupted when Israeli "undercover forces" surrounded a house in the camp.

The Israeli army did not immediately respond to a request for comment from AFP.

An official at Al Najah hospital in Nablus, speaking on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to speak to the media,

told AFP that Abu Asaab, a resident of Balata, had died "as a result of wounds sustained at dawn last Wednesday during the occupation (Zionist) forces' storming of the camp".

An AFP correspondent in Nablus said Abu Asaab's death was also announced over mosque loudspeakers throughout the city.

His death brought to 218 the number of Palestinians martyred in violence this year linked to the Zionist-Palestinian conflict.

Palestinian Branded With 'Star of David'

A Palestinian man who was detained by Zionist troops in occupied East Al-Quds said he has been physically abused after officers brutally beat him and branded the Star of David on his cheek, according to Israeli media reports.

The man's lawyer presented the charges to an Al-Quds district court on Thursday, a day after he was taken from his residence in the Shuafat refugee camp.

At least 16 officers were involved in the arrest of the Palestinian man, however, none had their body cameras on, according to the Ynet news website.

The officers blindfolded the man and proceeded to beat him with their fists "in all parts of his body", Ynet reported. The man's cheek was then branded with the Star of David symbol, it added.

Wadim Shub, the Palestinian man's lawyer, was quoted as saying in a statement that the incident was "a grave case of intentional violence and humiliation of a detainee by police" and demanded an immediate police investigation.

Report: All of MENA Will Live With Extreme Water Stress by 2050



The cracked surface at Kabakli lake, near the city of Diyarbakir, Turkey, on 10 August 2023.

CAIRO (Middle East Eye) – The world is confronting an unparalleled water crisis, with some of the most water-stressed countries being Bahrain, Cyprus, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, and Qatar, a new report by the World Resources Institute published this week shows.

The United Arab Emirates; Saudi Arabia; the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories; Egypt; Yemen; Iran; Jordan; Tunisia; Iraq; India; Syria; Morocco; Eritrea; and Algeria are among the top 30 countries with high water stress.

"Our data shows that 25 countries are currently exposed to extremely high water stress annually, meaning they use over 80 percent of their renewable water supply for irrigation, livestock, industry, and domestic needs," the report says.

"Even a short-term drought puts these places in danger of running out of water and sometimes prompts governments to shut off the taps."

Turkey has the 39th highest water stress in the world, the report shows. On Wednesday, residents of Istanbul were asked to reduce their water consumption, as major cities across the country grapple with a drought crisis amid high temperatures.

Istanbul Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu urged the city's 16 million residents to save "every precious water drop flowing from the tap".

His call came days after the Istanbul Water and Sewerage Administration (ISKI) published data showing that the city's dams were

only around 33 percent full as of mid-August, the lowest rate in nine years.

ISKI general manager Safak Basa launched a water-saving campaign last week to offset the "catastrophic drought" they are experiencing.

"We are going through a very drought period. While making all these investments, we are experiencing a catastrophic drought in which temperature records were indeed broken," he was quoted by local news agencies.

According to the World Resources Institute's Aqueduct Water Risk Atlas, by 2050, an additional 1 billion people are expected to live with extremely high water stress.

The report projects that global water demand will increase by 20 to 25 percent by 2050, while the number of watersheds facing high year-to-year variability, or less predictable water supplies, is expected to increase by 19 percent.

This means that in the Middle East and North Africa, 100 percent of the population will live with extremely high water stress by 2050.

"That's a problem not just for consumers and water-reliant industries, but for political stability," the report says.

The report notes that water scarcity in these nations is primarily attributed to limited supply, coupled with the needs of household, agricultural, and industrial sectors.

Water scarcity can result in disruptions to industries, energy blackouts, and declines in agricultural yield, the report notes.

Bahrainis Rally in Solidarity With Hunger Striking Inmates

MANAMA (Dispatches) – Protesters have taken to the streets in Bahrain to show solidarity with hunger-striking prisoners at the notorious Jau Prison and call for their immediate release, as the ruling Al Khalifah regime continues its clampdown on dissent.

The protesters staged rallies in the capital Manama, the northern towns of Jidhafs and al-Maqsha, and the villages of Sanabis and al-Daihi to denounce the Bah-

raini authorities' mistreatment of activists in the Arab country's detention centers.

The demonstrators held up pictures of Bahrain's most prominent Shia cleric Grand Ayatollah Sheikh Isa Qassim and demanded the release of all prisoners of conscience being kept behind bars in crowded jails.

The participants chanted anti-regime slogans, holding the Al Khalifah regime fully respon-

sible for the lives of the political inmates.

Anti-regime demonstrations have been regularly held in Bahrain since a popular uprising began in mid-February 2011.

People demand that the Al Khalifah regime relinquish power and allow a fair system representing all Bahrainis to be established.

Manama, however, has gone to great lengths to clamp down on

any sign of dissent.

A number of the prisoners have reportedly lost consciousness as a result of the protest action.

In a statement published by Bahrain's main opposition group, the al-Wefaq National Islamic Society, the prisoners said they were on hunger strike over prison officials preventing inmates from worshipping and subjecting them to 23-hour-long daily lockdowns.

Egypt's Sisi Pardons Prominent Activist, Other Prisoners

CAIRO (AFP) – Egyptian activist Ahmed Douma, a leading figure of the country's 2011 uprising who has spent the last decade behind bars, has been granted a presidential pardon, lawyers said Saturday.

"President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi... has used his constitutional powers" to pardon several prisoners including Douma, said lawyer Tarek Elawady, a member of the presidential pardons committee.

Prominent rights lawyer Khaled Ali meanwhile said on social media he was waiting outside Badr prison on Cairo's outskirts for the activist's release.

A court in 2019 had sentenced Douma to 15 years in prison on charges of clashing with security forces in the capital two years earlier, commuting a previous 25-year sentence handed down in 2015.

Egypt's top appeals court later in 2019 upheld the 15-year sentence, which also included a fine of six million Egyptian pounds (\$372,000 at the time).

Douma, now 37, was a leading

activist in the 2011 uprising that toppled former president Hosni Mubarak.

The activist published in 2021 a collection of poems titled "Curly", written while he was held in solitary confinement.

The collection was displayed at that year's Cairo International Book Fair but was quickly pulled for "security reasons".

In one of his poems from prison, Douma writes: "There's no time for depression, no opportunity for sadness, the flood is raging."

He was arrested in a crackdown following the 2013 military ouster of Mubarak's successor, Mohamed Morsi.

Sisi, a former army chief who spearheaded Morsi's ouster, has been accused of leading a relentless crackdown on both pro-democracy campaigners.

Key activists from the revolution remain behind bars, including British-Egyptian pro-democracy blogger Alaa Abdel Fattah, who has spent the better part of the past decade behind bars.

While rights defender Hos-

sam Bahgat welcomed the news of Douma's imminent release, he said the decision was made "without any transparency or understanding of why some people were selected and others were ignored".

The president has pardoned numerous prominent figures over

the past year, but critics have charged that more people have been arrested in the meantime.

Since April last year, authorities have released 1,000 political prisoners amid much fanfare, but detained almost 3,000 more, according to Egyptian rights monitors.

20th Anniversary of Deadly Attack on UN Headquarters in Iraq Marked

BAGHDAD (AP) – Iraqi and United Nations officials on Saturday marked the 20th anniversary of a deadly attack on the UN headquarters in Baghdad.

The Aug. 19, 2003, truck bomb attack on the Canal Hotel in Baghdad, which housed the UN headquarters in Iraq at the time, killed 22 UN staff including the head, Sergio Vieira de Mello, a rising UN star. It was the deadliest attack against UN staff in its history.

The attack came in the wake of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq that toppled the dictator, Sad-

dam Hussein, but unleashed an insurgency and years of brutal war in the country.

At the commemoration ceremony held Saturday at the site of the attack, which has since been converted into a rehabilitation center for people struggling with addiction, the head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, said that the "wounds created by the 2003 attack – and the violence that came after it – run deep" and "may never fully heal."

But Hennis-Plasschaert point-

ed to recent gains in Iraq's stability and attempts by the current government to improve social services.

The past 20 years have been "a very rough road," she said. "But throughout these years, the United Nations has not given up on its efforts to contribute to peace and stability in Iraq."

Iraqi Foreign Minister Fouad Hussein, speaking at the event, called the attack "one of the most tragic incidents in the history of Iraq" and affirmed the country's commitment to com-

bating terrorism. As for the UN workers who lost their lives, he said, "their achievements will remain in the history of Iraq."

A day earlier, at the UN headquarters in New York, officials held a silent commemoration and read out the names of the victims.

President of the UN General Assembly Csaba Kőrösi met briefly with some of the survivors. In a statement, he hailed "humanitarian workers, who race to save lives, and remain at crisis scenes long after the global spotlight dims."