

BEIRUT (Xinhua) – The Lebanese navy has rescued 125 migrants on board an illegal boat off the shores of al-Mina in the northern city of Tripoli near the Palm Islands. According to the National News Agency, the boat had set off from al-Abda Beach, and its engine broke down on Friday afternoon. The passengers called for help from the army naval forces, whose members immediately intervened and rescued them. The boat and passengers were transferred to the port of Tripoli and were provided with first aid immediately. Over the past three years, Lebanon witnessed rising attempts at illegal immigration by sea to Europe amid the country's financial crisis which has plunged many Lebanese families into poverty.

Whoever wants to be a leader should educate himself before educating others. Before preaching to others he should first practice himself. Whoever educates himself and improves his own morals is superior to the man who tries to teach and train others.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

Report: Pentagon Plans Major Cuts to U.S. Forces in Pivot Away From West Asia

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – The U.S. Department of Defence is planning to make large cuts to the country's special operation forces, as it shifts its focus from West Asia to China, according to a report from the Wall Street Journal.

The U.S. Army is going to cut around 3,000 troops of its special forces, about 10 percent, which could include its famed Green Beret commando units which have been mobilized over the past several decades, including in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The final documents have yet to be signed by Pentagon chief Lloyd Austin, officials told the newspaper, but the army is planning to brief Congress in the coming days. The majority of the cuts include supporting roles like psychological warfare, intelligence operators, communications troops, and logistics roles.

U.S. special forces have been a pillar of the country's post-9/11 wars in West Asia.

Since the 9/11 attacks in 2001, United States Special



U.S. forces at joint camp Taji in northern Baghdad, Iraq

Operations Command, which includes special forces in the Navy, Marines, and Air Force, has grown from 45,000 to 75,000, according to a Government Accountability Office report.

Special forces have been glorified by Hollywood in a number of films and television series, and some critics have dismissed many of the films as propaganda for the military industrial complex, citing the

Pentagon's influence on the film industry.

However, after two decades of surging U.S. military presence in the region, Washington began to withdraw from the Middle East and other countries that were a target in the U.S. "War on Terror".

In August 2021, the Biden administration oversaw the completion of the American military withdrawal from Afghanistan, ending the country's

two-decade military presence in the country.

The reported cut to special forces would need to be approved by Congress. However, if it goes through, then it would mark another direction away from using such forces in prolonged counterterrorism operations in the Middle East.

It would also turn the Pentagon's focus to a potential larger-scale conflict with China amid a new great power competition era, which officials told the Wall Street Journal would require a larger conventional military force.

The planned cuts also come as the U.S. Army is facing recruitment struggles. So far this year, the military missed a recruiting goal by 15,000 people, according to the newspaper.

The U.S. military's recruiting struggle has been an issue for the country for the past several years, as many in the American public have become opposed to military intervention after witnessing the "forever wars" fought in West Asia.

Turkey ‘Neutralizes’ 58 Kurdish Militants in Northern Syria

ANKARA (Reuters) – Turkish forces have “neutralized” 58 Kurdish militants in northern Syria in overnight attacks on militant targets, the Defence Ministry said on Saturday, as conflict in the region escalated nearly a week after a bomb attack in Ankara.

Turkey this week said all targets belonging to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militia and the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia were “legitimate targets” for its forces, after the PKK claimed responsibility for Sunday's bombing in Ankara which wounded two police officers and killed the two attackers.

Turkey said the attackers

came from Syria but the Syrian SDF forces denied this. Since the bomb attack, Ankara has launched a barrage of air strikes and attacks against militant targets in northern Syria and Iraq, while ramping up security operations at home.

“Targets belonging to PKK/YPG terrorists in northern Syria's Euphrates Shield, Olive Branch, and Peace Spring operation areas were hit strongly all night long,” the ministry said, referring to regions where Turkey has previously mounted operations.

The ministry said the operations, which it says are carried out under self-defence rights,

had “neutralized” 58 militants in the region. Ankara typically uses the term “neutralized” to mean killed.

Late on Friday, the ministry had said Turkey's military had conducted air strikes in northern Syria, destroying 15 militant targets where it said militants were believed to be.

Speaking at his ruling AK Party's congress in Ankara on Saturday, President Tayyip Erdogan repeated his warning that Turkey “may suddenly come one night”, a term he has often used to target militants in Syria and Iraq.

“We will implement our strategy of ending terror at its root

with determination, and hold the PKK, FETO, and Daesh to account over every drop of blood they have spilled,” he said, referring to the network of U.S.-based cleric Fethullah Gulen whom Ankara accuses of orchestrating a failed coup attempt in July 2016.

Turkey lists the YPG as a terrorist organization and says it is indistinguishable from the PKK, which has fought an insurgency against the Turkish state since 1984 in which more than 40,000 people have been killed.

The United States and European Union deem the PKK a terrorist organization, but not the YPG.

Egyptian Gov’t Accused of ‘Covering Up’ Fatalities at Police HQ Fire

CAIRO (Middle East Eye) – An Egyptian rights group has accused the government of covering up deaths in a major fire that broke out at a police headquarters earlier this week that the interior ministry said only left dozens wounded.

On Monday, the fire destroyed the Ismailia Police Directorate building, but the ministry has yet to disclose the real number of casualties or the reason for the incident.

The fire took place on the same day that President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi announced his intention to run for a third term in the December elections.

Nationwide events were also held that evening celebrating the president's announcement, sponsored by the largest pro-government political party, the Nations Future Party.

On Tuesday, the Egyptian Network for Human Rights (ENHR) published a list of eight

names and photos of officers it said died in the fire, which it obtained via a security source who worked at the building.

But the interior ministry denied that any deaths took place and reported only 38 injured cases, while the public prosecution has also not reported any deaths in its latest statement on the fire.

A day later, Mada Masr, an Egyptian news website, documented 13 cases of deaths and eight of them matched the names published by the ENHR. The website verified the deaths by citing tributes and invitations to funerals posted online by relatives of the deceased or members of parliament.

Dozens Detained

Meanwhile, at least 67 men have been detained over the past week after protests in the northern Egyptian coastal city of Mersa Matruh

called for an end to the rule of el-Sisi, according to a human rights lawyer.

A number of state-sponsored rallies on Monday that were initially declared to support Sisi following the announcement that he would be running for a third term spontaneously switched and turned into anti-government demonstrations.

Dozens of videos shared on social media - and verified as accurate by a number of activists and open source investigations - showed people in Mersa Matruh, a Mediterranean city, and in the Nile Delta governorate of Menoufia, calling on Sisi to step down and burning or trampling on campaign banners of the incumbent president.

The footage followed reports of nationwide events, sponsored by the pro-Sisi Nations Future Party, celebrating Sisi's decision to run for a third term in the upcoming presidential elections scheduled for 10-12 December.

Moroccans Protest on Anniversary of Normalization With Zionist Regime



A protester burns a Zionist flag in front of the parliament building in the capital Rabat on October 6, 2023, during a rally against the now-one-year-old detente between the country and the occupying regime.

RABAT (Dispatches) – Moroccans have staged a protest against the now-one-year-old detente between the country and the Zionist regime, saying they stand by Palestinians' rights.

The rally was held in front of the parliament building in the capital Rabat on Friday.

Morocco and the occupying regime resumed their relations last December. Rabat had cut its ties with Tel Aviv two decades ago following the eruption of the second Palestinian Intifada (Uprising).

The detente came as part of the Abraham Accords, a series of rapprochement deals mediated by the United States between the occupying regime and some regional Arab countries, including the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

The protesters shouted slogans against the Israeli regime and the country's authorities over the normalization.

The participants expressed outrage at Israeli forces and illegal settlers' near-daily violations

against the Al-Aqsa Mosque's compound -- located in the holy occupied city of Al-Quds' Old City -- at which non-Muslim worship is forbidden.

They also denounced the occupying regime for its retaining its crippling all-out land, aerial, and naval blockade of the Palestinian territory of the Gaza Strip.

The protest had been called by Morocco's National Society of Endeavor for Liberation of Palestine.

“Today, we came together again to say Moroccans are still steadfast in their support for the Palestinian people,” said Abdul-Qader al-Alami from the society.

“The Moroccans sympathize with the Palestinian people and what they (the Palestinians) experience in terms of [Israeli] violation and crime all over Palestine,” he added. “We also express our opposition to normalization and normalizers, and consider it (the detente) to be a source of encouragement for the occupying regime to continue its crimes.”

UN Warns Pakistan Against Forcibly Deporting Afghans

ISLAMABAD (AP) – Forcibly deporting Afghans from Pakistan could lead to severe human rights violations including the separation of families and deportation of minors, the United Nations warned Saturday.

Pakistan recently announced a crackdown on migrants living in the country illegally, including 1.7 million Afghans, telling them to return to their home countries by Oct. 31 to avoid mass arrest and expulsion.

The government denies targeting Afghans and says the focus is on people who are in the country illegally, regardless of their nationality. It said it is setting up a hotline and offering rewards to people who tip off authorities about such migrants.

The UN agencies said Afghanistan is going through a severe humanitarian crisis with several rights challenges, particularly for women and girls, who are banned by the Taliban from education beyond sixth grade, most public spaces and many jobs.

“Such plans would have serious implications for all who have been forced to leave the country and may face serious protection risks upon return,” it said, referring to Pakistan's crackdown.

They acknowledged Pakistan's “sovereign prerogative” over domestic policies and said they are ready to help register and manage Afghan nationals, including those who may be in need of international protection.

The International Organization for Migration and UN Refugee Agency called on countries to “suspend forcible returns of Afghan nationals and ensure any possible returns to the country take place in a safe, dignified and voluntary manner.”

Landlords and real estate owners in the Pakistani capital, Islamabad, have received notices telling them to evict “illegal Afghans” and their families by the end of the month or face action.

Police have asked clerics in some of the city's mosques to tell worshippers of their duty to inform on Afghans in their neighborhoods.

The information minister in the southwestern Pakistani province of Baluchistan, Jan Achakzai, said hundreds of Afghan families have voluntarily left the country and crossed the border since the announcement. Rights groups and the Taliban-led administration in Afghanistan have criticized the crackdown.