

[Netanyahu quits Israel election rally as rocket alert sounds](#)

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Tue, 2019-09-10 18:47

JERUSALEM: Sirens warning of rocket fire from Gaza cut short an election rally by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the southern city of Ashkelon late Tuesday, public television reported.

KAN 11 broadcast footage of Netanyahu's security detail closing in around him as he was speaking from the podium.

One of them whispered in his ear before the premier raised a hand in farewell and was hustled from the building.

The Israel army said in a brief statement that sirens had sounded in Ashkelon and the port city of Ashdod, but it did not elaborate.

There were no immediate reports of rockets falling in any urban area.

The incident came less than three hours after Netanyahu pledged to annex the Jordan Valley in the occupied West Bank if re-elected in September 17 polls.



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Israeli PM Netanyahu sparks anger with vow to annex Jordan Valley
Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu makes controversial Hebron visit

[US announces fresh sanctions on Iranian guards, Daesh and Hamas](#)

Tue, 2019-09-10 20:34

WASHINGTON: The United States said it was imposing sanctions on a “wide range of terrorists and their supporters,” including the Palestinian group Hamas and Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, on Tuesday, on the eve of the 18th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks.

The sanctions targeted 15 leaders, individuals and entities affiliated with groups including Hamas, Al-Qaeda, Daesh and Iran’s IRGC, the US Treasury Department said in a statement.

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[US drops 40 tons of bombs on Daesh-'infested' island in Iraq](#)

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Associated Press

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Tue, 2019-09-10 16:13

BAGHDAD: The US-led coalition says American warplanes have dropped 36,000 kilograms (40 tons) of bombs on an Island in the Tigris River "infested" with members of the Daesh group.

The coalition said F15 and F35 warplanes took part in the bombing on Qanus Island in the central province of Salaheddine, north of the capital Baghdad. Tuesday's attack is part of operations carried out by Iraqi forces and the US-led coalition against Daesh, which was defeated in Iraq in 2017.

Daesh sleeper cells have since carried out deadly bombings in Iraq.

Daesh controlled large swathes of Syria and Iraq where they declared a caliphate in 2014.

A video released by the military showed massive explosions creating mushroom clouds billowing from the island that appeared to have been subjected to carpet bombing.



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Iraqi government in turmoil over PMC bid to form own air force

[500 refugees trapped in Libya to be evacuated to Rwanda](#)

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By LORI HINNANT | AP

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Tue, 2019-09-10 16:25

PARIS: Rwanda agreed Tuesday to take in 500 refugees and asylum-seekers trapped in Libya under an agreement signed with the United Nations and African Union.

The deal comes after repeated allegations of dire conditions for migrants in Libya's detention centers, including beatings and other abuses, rape and a lack of both medical care and food. Many are intercepted in the Mediterranean by the EU-funded Libyan coast guard, which itself has been the repeated focus of abuse allegations.

The UN says its own center for migrants and refugees in Tripoli is becoming dangerously overcrowded as is its center for evacuees in Niger. The UN says around 4,700 people are being held in Libyan detention centers and around 1,000 in a separate UN facility in Tripoli.

Evacuation flights to Rwanda are expected to begin in the coming weeks. Under the deal, Rwanda would accept an initial group of 500 people who agreed to leave Libya, mostly from the Horn of Africa, and they would be housed in a center that has already been constructed 60 kilometers (37 miles) outside the capital, Kigali. They would be free to come and go from the center, according to Babar Beloch, a spokesman for the UN refugee agency.

Rwanda, however, has a troubled past with refugees. Amnesty International said that in 2018, Rwandan soldiers fired on protesting Congolese refugees, killing at least 11.

Baloch said the world body is asking members to contribute to the Rwanda evacuation, with hopes it can be expanded beyond the initial 500 people. He didn't say what the budget would be or where the money came from for the initial departures.

"You could say that anything is better than being stuck in a Libyan detention center," said Jeff Crisp, a migration researcher at Oxford University. "These are pretty desperate people and this is a potential opportunity to get somewhere else."

But he cautioned that the deal raises numerous questions, including what choices the evacuees would have once they arrive in Rwanda, especially if they are refused refugee status or they aren't given permanent placement in another country. In Niger, just a fraction of people have found spots in Europe or elsewhere and the camp has been full for months.



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UN envoy on Libya warns conflict could trigger chaos
Charity boat rescues 50 African migrants in sea off Libya

[Israeli PM Netanyahu sparks anger with vow to annex Jordan Valley](#)

Tue, 2019-09-10 18:36

JERUSALEM: The United Nations on Tuesday warned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that his plan to annex the Jordan Valley in the occupied West Bank if re-elected would have no “international legal effect.” Netanyahu issued the deeply controversial pledge as he gears up for September 17 elections. He also said Israel would move to annex Israeli settlements throughout the West Bank. Such moves could effectively kill any remaining hopes for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, long the focus of international

diplomacy.

"The secretary-general's position has always been clear: unilateral actions are not helpful in the peace process," UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said. "Any Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdictions and administration in the occupied West Bank is without any international legal effect," the spokesman added.

"Such a prospect would be devastating to the potential of reviving negotiations, regional peace, and the very essence of a two-state solution." "There is one place where we can apply Israeli sovereignty immediately after the elections," Netanyahu said in a televised speech.

"If I receive from you, citizens of Israel, a clear mandate to do so ... today I announce my intention to apply with the formation of the next government Israeli sovereignty over the Jordan Valley and northern Dead Sea."

Following the announcement, a US official said Washington's policy toward Israel and the Palestinian territories remains unchanged.

"There is no change in United States policy at this time," a Trump administration official said when asked whether the White House supported Netanyahu's move.

"We will release our Vision for Peace after the Israeli election and work to determine the best path forward to bring long sought security, opportunity and stability to the region."

The Jordan Valley accounts for around one-third of the West Bank, which Israel occupied in the 1967 Six-Day War – a move never recognized by the international community.

The prime minister also reiterated his intention to annex Israeli settlements throughout the West Bank if re-elected, though in coordination with US President Donald Trump, whose long-awaited peace plan is expected to be unveiled sometime after the vote.

Those moves could effectively kill any remaining hopes for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, long the focus of international diplomacy.

Senior Palestinian official Hanan Ashrawi said Netanyahu was "not only destroying the two-state solution, he is destroying all chances of peace."

"This is a total game changer," she told AFP.

The Jordan Valley accounts for around one-third of the West Bank and Israeli right-wing politicians have long viewed the strategic area as a part of the territory they would never retreat from.

Israeli settlements are located in what is known as Area C of the West Bank, which accounts for some 60 percent of the territory, including the vast majority of the Jordan Valley.

Netanyahu said his annexation plans would not include Palestinian cities, such as the Jordan Valley's Jericho.

Netanyahu, who used a map of the Jordan Valley to illustrate his plans, said Trump's peace parameters "will place before us a great challenge and also a great opportunity."

"This is a historic, one-time opportunity to apply Israeli sovereignty on our settlements... and other places of importance to our security, our heritage and our future."

Trump has thrown US support overwhelmingly in favor of Israel since taking office, including by recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital and cutting

hundreds of millions of dollars in aid to the Palestinians. Ahead of April elections, Trump recognized Israeli sovereignty over the occupied Golan Heights, seized from Syria in the 1967 Six-Day War. It is unclear if Trump, who made clear before April's vote that he would like to see Netanyahu win, will follow up with any further expressions of support before next week's election. Netanyahu along with his right-wing and religious allies won a majority of seats in April polls, but he failed to form a coalition and opted for an unprecedented second election in five months. He is again facing a difficult challenge from ex-military chief Benny Gantz and his centrist Blue and White alliance. Right-wing nationalist votes will be key to Netanyahu's efforts to continue his reign as Israel's longest-serving prime minister. He is also facing a potential indictment for corruption pending a hearing scheduled for early October. Israel occupied the West Bank in the 1967 Six-Day War in a move never recognized by the international community. Its settlements there are considered illegal under international law and major stumbling blocks to peace as they are built on land the Palestinian see as part of their future state. Israel says the Jordan Valley is vital to its security.

(With AFP and Reuters)



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Jordan summons Israeli ambassador after citizens detained Israeli PM's bid to place cameras at polling stations fails