

# Yemen coalition strikes Houthi military targets in Sanaa

Mon, 2019-08-19 23:35

JEDDAH: The coalition in Yemen launched an attack on Monday on Houthi military targets in Sanaa.

The coalition advised civilians to stay away from the targeted areas, state TV said.

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# US scraps West Bank conference over Palestinian protests

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Mon, 2019-08-19 23:32

RAMALLAH: The US Embassy in Jerusalem on Monday was forced to postpone a conference it organized in the West Bank city of Ramallah after Palestinian officials and factions called for a boycott and threatened to organize protests.

The Palestinians cut all ties with the US after it recognized disputed Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in 2017, and view the Trump administration as unfairly biased following a series of actions seen as hostile to their aspirations for an independent state.

The embassy had organized a conference this week to bring together alumni of US educational and cultural programs, including dozens of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip who received permission from Israel to attend.

The territory has been under an Israeli-Egyptian blockade since Hamas seized power there in 2007.

The Palestinian leadership viewed the conference as an attempt to circumvent its boycott of the US administration.

"We are aware of recent statements regarding a planned event for alumni of US educational and cultural programs," the US Embassy said. "In order to avoid the Palestinian participants being put in a difficult situation, we have decided to postpone the event for now."

It said this and other events "are designed to create opportunities for exchange and dialogue between Americans and Palestinians at the grassroots level."

"This event in particular is intended to give alumni of all ages and backgrounds from Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza an opportunity to network with each other and to engage in leadership and capacity building activities," it said.

Israel captured east Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza in the 1967 Middle East War, territories the Palestinians want for their future state. The Trump administration is at work on a long-awaited peace plan, but has not endorsed a two-state solution to the conflict. The Palestinians have already dismissed the plan, saying it is certain to be slanted toward Israel.

Representatives of several Palestinian factions held a press conference Monday at the hotel where the meeting was to have taken place.

Spokesman Isam Baker told The Associated Press that the Palestine Liberation Organization, an umbrella group, had reached out to the hotel management and the invitees asking them to boycott the meeting.

"Most of the invitees and the hotel administration agreed with us that the invitation has political implications and it is not innocent," he said.

"The US administration, which has cut off all aid to our people, shut down our office in Washington and placed huge pressure on our leadership to accept a pro-Israel political plan will not do any good for our people," he said.

"Therefore, we are boycotting any activities it organizes."

The US cut more than \$200 million in development aid to the Palestinians last year, gutting several long-running programs .

A statement released Sunday by the "national and Islamic forces of the Ramallah governorate" said they were determined to thwart the conference, calling it an attempt to "break the will of the Palestinian people." It said

they planned to organize a “mass popular event to prevent this activity by all available means,” calling for a sit-in and marches. The youth wing of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas’ Fatah party also called for a boycott. It vowed to “exercise all forms of legal and popular pressure to express rejection of this conference being held on occupied Palestinian land.” It also called for an “apology” from the hotel.



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# Jordan's MPs call for action to defend Al-Aqsa

Mon, 2019-08-19 23:15

AMMAN: Jordan's parliament wants to scrap the country's peace treaty with Israel, expel the Israeli ambassador, recall Jordan's envoy to Tel Aviv and halt all normalization with Israel.

Members held an emergency session on Monday to urge the government to take a tough line with Israel, amid tension over Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem.

The Jordanian foreign ministry summoned Israeli ambassador Amir Weissbrod on Sunday to voice its "condemnation and rejection of Israeli violations" at Al-Aqsa, where Israeli security forces attacked tens of thousands of Palestinian worshippers last week.

Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi told MPs the Israelis had been given a "stern" warning. The accepted status of Al-Aqsa is that anyone may visit but only Muslims may pray there. However, there are growing demands for change by extreme right-wing Jewish nationalists.

Palestinians in Jerusalem welcomed Jordan's stance, said Khaleel Assali, a member of the Islamic Waqf Council which administers Al-Aqsa. "They see Jordan as the last line of defense for Al-Aqsa," he told Arab News.

Wasfi Kailani, executive director of the Hashemite Fund for the restoration of Al-Aqsa, said some Israeli government officials had become the problem. "In the past, we were told that there were only a few radicals pushing for the right to prayer at Al-Aqsa," he said.

"Now we see 100 rabbis signing a petition calling for that, and senior government officials are insisting on the need to change the status quo."





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## [Egypt court hands out 6 death sentences on terror charges](#)

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Mon, 2019-08-19 15:45

CAIRO: An Egyptian court has sentenced six people to death on terror charges for carrying out attacks that killed at least three people, including a policeman, on the outskirts of the capital.

Giza criminal court on Monday also sentenced 41 defendants, including 28 in

absentia, to life in prison on similar charges, including possession of weapons and explosives. Another seven defendants received 15 years, and one got three years. The court acquitted 14 others. The verdict can be appealed.

The charges stem from two different attacks in 2013 and 2015 in the town of Kerdasa, located near the famed Giza Pyramids.

Kerdasa had been a hotbed of Islamist support for ex-President Muhammad Mursi, who was ousted by the military in June 2013 after massive protests against his rule.



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## [Bahrain to join US-led efforts to protect Gulf navigation](#)

Author:

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Mon, 2019-08-19 15:26

DUBAI: Bahrain said Monday it would join US-led efforts to protect shipping in the Arabian Gulf amid tensions between Washington and Tehran after a series of attacks on tankers.

Bahrain's King Hamad voiced his country's appreciation of the "US role in supporting regional security and stability" during a meeting with US Central Command (CENTCOM) chief General Kenneth McKenzie, state media said.

"The king confirmed the kingdom of Bahrain's participation in the joint effort to preserve the safety of international maritime navigation and secure international corridors for trade and energy," the official Bahrain News Agency reported.

The US has been seeking to form a coalition to guarantee freedom of navigation in the Gulf.

Central Command welcomed the Bahrain's decision to join the coalition and take an "active role in preserving the freedom of navigation, promoting maritime security and de-escalating regional tensions."

"The free flow of commerce throughout international waterways is a linchpin of the global economy, and we appreciate the Kingdom of Bahrain's leadership and support in preventing aggression from curtailing that freedom,"

Britain, which already has warships on protection duty in the Gulf after a UK-flagged tanker was seized by Iranian Revolutionary Guards, has said it will join the planned operation.

But other European countries have declined to join, for fear of harming European efforts to rescue a 2015 treaty with Iran over its nuclear program. Bahrain, which hosts the US Fifth Fleet, said last month that it would co-host a conference with the US on "maritime and air navigation security," set for October.

Iran has seized three tankers in strategic Gulf waters since last month, including a British-flagged vessel.

That came after British Royal Marines helped impound a tanker carrying Iranian oil off the British overseas territory of Gibraltar on July 4.

Britain suspected it was destined for Syria in defiance of European Union sanctions, which Iran denies.

The US and its Gulf allies have also accused the Islamic republic of carrying out several mysterious attacks on ships in the region, which Tehran denies.





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