

[Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas will refuse Israeli tax transfers](#)

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Associated Press

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Wed, 2019-02-20 15:17

RAMALLAH, West Bank: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas says he will not accept a monthly tax transfer from Israel if it carries out its decision to deduct amounts the Palestinians pay to the families of prisoners and people killed in fighting with Israel.

Abbas on Wednesday accused Israel of trying to put political pressure on him and violating longstanding economic agreements.

He said it would be the "final nail in the coffin" of those agreements and said he would not accept the funds if even "one penny" is deducted.

The monthly tax transfers cover about two-thirds of the Palestinian budget. Without those funds, Abbas' autonomy government will fall into a crisis and not be able to pay full salaries to its tens of thousands of employees.



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Palestinian PM willing to quit if president Abbas wishes
Future rabis plant with Palestinians, sow rift with Israel

[Yemeni government approves UN plan for redeployment in Hodeidah](#)

Wed, 2019-02-20 12:53

DUBAI: The Yemeni government said on Wednesday that it approved a UN plan for redeployment in Hodeidah, Al Arabiya reported.

The withdrawal from Hodeidah will be carried out under the supervision of UN monitoring committee and will begin in the next 11 days.

The Houthi militia will withdraw by 5 km, while the Yemeni government will withdraw by 3.5 km south of the Red Sea Mills. This aims to secure the passage for relief workers to the Red Sea Mills.

The UN said it had been unable to access the Red Sea Mills – which has enough grain to feed 3.7 million people for a month – in Hodeida since Sept. last year.

Martin Griffiths and Michael Lollesgaard – who heads the monitoring mission – will oversee the implementation of the Stockholm agreement.

Lollesgaard assured the Yemeni government that the Houthis will withdraw 5 km away from Al-Saleef and Ras Eisa ports within the next four days.

Government officials are also expected to return to their official posts in Hodeidah after the Houthi withdrawal.



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Troop withdrawal in Yemen's Hodeidah could start Tuesday, Wednesday: UN envoy Griffiths

[Trucks evacuate civilians from last Daesh pocket in Syria: SDF official](#)

Author:

Reuters

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Wed, 2019-02-20 10:34

BAGHOUZ, Syria: A convoy of trucks carrying hundreds of civilians, including men, women and children, left the last enclave held by Daesh militants in eastern Syria on Wednesday, signaling a possible end to a standoff that has lasted for more than a week.

An Associated Press team in Baghouz, a village near the Iraqi border where the Daesh group is making its final stand, counted at least 17 trucks that

emerged through a humanitarian corridor used in past weeks to evacuate people from the militants' last patch of territory along the Euphrates River. Women, children and men, some with checkered headscarves, or keffiyehs, could be seen through a flap opening on the flatbed trucks. One man carried a crutch; the women were engulfed in conservative black garments covering their faces known as niqabs.

Mustafa Bali, a spokesman for the Syrian Democratic Forces, the US-backed militia spearheading the fight against Daesh in Syria, confirmed the trucks were carrying civilians out of the enclave.

It was not immediately clear if militants were also on board the trucks. Around 300 militants are believed to be holed up in the enclave, along with several hundred civilians. On Tuesday, Bali said a military operation aimed at ousting the extremists from the area will begin if they don't surrender, adding that such an operation would take place after separating or evacuating the civilians from the militants.

An SDF commander, Zana Amedi, said most of the militants remaining inside the enclave are seriously wounded or sick.

The Daesh group has been reduced from its self-proclaimed "caliphate" that once spread across much of Syria and Iraq at its height in 2014 to a speck of land on the countries' shared border.

The SDF has been encircling the remaining Daesh-held territory for days, waiting to declare the territorial defeat of the extremist group.

Nearly 20,000 civilians had left the shrinking area in recent weeks before the evacuation halted last week when the militants closed all the roads out of the tiny area.



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US weighing options on American Daesh sympathizer in Syria
Daesh terrorists in Syria face two choices: Surrender or death

[Israeli police arrest 19 Palestinians at Jerusalem holy site](#)

Author:

Associated Press

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Tue, 2019-02-19 21:13

JERUSALEM: Israeli police say they have arrested 19 Palestinians as clashes broke out at a contested Jerusalem holy site.

Police say dozens of Palestinians participated in a prayer protest Tuesday, attempting to breach a section of the compound that has been closed by Israeli court order for years.

Palestinian medics reported that several protesters were injured in the standoff.

The incident follows a similar scuffle on Monday in which Palestinians tried to break the gate that Israel placed on the closed area last week.

The compound, revered by Jews as the Temple Mount and by Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary, is considered the holiest place in Judaism and the third holiest in Islam.

Any trace of Israeli security interference in the shrine, home to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, can ignite violence.



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Israel to withhold \$138 mln from Palestinians over prisoner payments
Israeli police probe suspicious attempts to appoint 2 judges

[**OIC foreign ministers to meet in Abu Dhabi**](#)

Author:

Arab News

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Tue, 2019-02-19 15:46

JEDDAH: The foreign ministers of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states will meet in Abu Dhabi on March 1-2 to discuss the OIC's role in promoting development in member states.

Secretary-General Dr. Yousef bin Ahmad Al-Othaimeen said reaching higher levels of development and prosperity for member states, and strengthening economic and trade relations between them, are among the most important pillars of the OIC's economic program.

"Economic cooperation between OIC member states is based on the established connection between development and peace, security and stability," he added. Al-Othaimeen cited the number of member states (57), and the diversity of their natural sources, as positive factors in terms of economic cooperation. To improve economic and social cooperation between member states, he called for the implementation of joint programs to mobilize resources and maximize opportunities.

The foreign ministers will discuss the effectiveness and adoption of the OIC's various programs and measures.

They will also highlight their national priorities for economic development, and areas of convergence with the OIC's objectives, plans and programs.

The ministers will discuss activating different financing mechanisms, and the development and marketing of Islamic financial products and other innovative financing tools.

They will also explore the active participation of community-based organizations in developing the rural sector; promoting employment of the youth, women and vulnerable people; promoting economic best practices; improving the quality of human resources; and providing appropriate institutional frameworks for national economic development strategies.



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