

## US Fails to Win UN Condemnation of Hamas Militants in Gaza

UNITED NATIONS - A U.S.-sponsored draft resolution that for the first time would have condemned the militant Islamic group Hamas, which controls Gaza, failed to win the required two-thirds majority in the U.N. General Assembly on Thursday. Before the vote on the resolution, the 193-member world body had narrowly voted to require a two-thirds majority for approval as sought by Arab nations for rather than the simple majority urged by the United States.

U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley told the assembly before the vote that it could make history and unconditionally speak out against Hamas, which she called "one of the most obvious and grotesque cases of terrorism in the world."



But the vote on the resolution to condemn Hamas was 87 in favor against 57 opposed, with 33 abstentions — a plurality but below the

two-thirds requirement to adopt it. The vote was 87 in favor against 57 opposed, with 33 abstentions — a plurality but below the

countries changing their votes to "yes" at the last minute.

The U.S. attempt to condemn Hamas and demand that the militant group stop firing rockets into Israel, using "airborne incendiary devices," and putting civilians at risk sparked a Palestinian-backed amendment sponsored by Bolivia. It outlined the basis for comprehensive Israeli-Palestinian peace and referred to a December 2016 Security Council resolution that condemned Israeli settlements in the West Bank and east Jerusalem as a "flagrant violation" of international law. It also reaffirmed "unwavering support" for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict — issues not included in the U.S. draft. (Fox News)

## Neighbor News

### Saudi, Russia Leave World Guessing after OPEC Meeting

TEHRAN - OPEC has tentatively agreed an oil output reduction but is reportedly waiting for Russia to declare its commitment before deciding the exact volumes for a cut aimed at propping up crude prices.

The agreement was reached during the Thursday talks between OPEC members in the Austrian capital of Vienna.

Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak flew home from Vienna earlier for talks with President Vladimir Putin in St Petersburg. He is going to return to Vienna on Friday for discussions among OPEC and non-OPEC allies.

"We hope to conclude

something by the end of the day tomorrow ... We have to get the non-OPEC countries on board," Saudi Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih told reporters before the OPEC meeting started.

"If everybody is not willing to join and contribute equally, we will wait until they are," he said.

Asked whether OPEC could fail to reach a deal, Falih said all options were on the table. His comments came after Iran's Oil Minister Bijan Zangeneh said Tehran will not involve itself in any deal over OPEC production levels as long as it remains under the illegal US sanctions. (Press TV)

### Imran Khan Tells Trump: Pakistan Not 'Hired Gun' Anymore

TEHRAN - Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan has expressed regret over his country's past dealings with the United States, asserting that Pakistan will not act as a 'hired gun' for the US anymore.

"I would never want to have a relationship where Pakistan is treated like a hired gun — given money to fight someone else's war. We should never put ourselves in this position again," said Khan said, press tv reported.

Responding to US claims that Pakistan has been harboring militants within its borders, Khan stressed that his country had in fact served the US by participating in the so-

called war on terror, a war Islamabad had "nothing to do with".

"If we had stayed neutral after 9/11, I reckon we would have saved ourselves from the devastation that took place afterward. By becoming the frontline state for the US in the war on terror, this country went through hell," said Khan.

"It not only cost us human lives, devastation of our tribal areas, but it also cost us our dignity."

Khan's revisionist comments on US relations come as the Pakistani premier had a heated exchange with US President Donald Trump earlier last month. (FNA)

### IOM Global Migration Film Festival Comes to Tajikistan

DUSHANBE - The third edition of the Global Migration Film Festival (GMFF) has been launched by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) - The United Nations Migration Agency in over 100 countries. The Festival is dedicated to the International Migrants Day annually marked on December 18, Trend reports referring to news.tj. In Tajikistan, the Festival opened on December 6 with a screening of On the Same Boat, a documentary exploring the human faces of the migrant crisis in the Mediterranean.

According to IOM Mission in Tajikistan, the Tajikistan edition of the Festival will continue with more film presentations in early 2019. The schedule and locations of the shows in 2019 will be announced on the IOM Tajikistan Facebook page. This year's edition of the Festival features films and documentaries that strive to capture the promise and challenges of migration, as well as the unique contribution that migrants make to their new communities. The goal of the Festival is to pave the way for greater discussion around one of the greatest phenomenon of our time.

"Films have the power to show the different faces of life, from many different angles, which can in turn help viewers cultivate a deeper empathy for migrants and a better understanding of their realities, needs, perspectives and capacities. (Trend)

### Turkmenistan Starting to Revise National Strategy on Climate Change

ASHGABAT - Turkmenistan, in accordance with international commitments, is starting the process to revise the National Strategy on Climate Change, Trend reports citing the Neutral Turkmenistan newspaper.

This measure is taken as part of the international commitments of Turkmenistan to implement the provisions of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the global Paris Agreement and in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals in the

country. This work will be coordinated by the Turkmen State Committee for Environmental Protection and Land Resources, with the support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ).

The National Strategy on Climate Change was developed considering the provisions of the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol, to which Turkmenistan joined in 1995 and 1998, respectively. (Trend)

### French Government Defends Heavy-Handed Police Tactics Against Students

PARIS - France's government on Friday defended the tactics of riot police who forced several dozen detained high-school students to kneel in rows with their hands held behind their heads or in handcuffs after violent protests west of Paris.

Students this week have been blocking access to scores of high schools across France in protest at President Emmanuel Macron's education reforms, just as the 40-year-old leader grapples with sometimes-violent demonstrations over living

costs. Videos and photos of the students from two high schools in Val Fourre, a deprived neighborhood outside Mantes-La-Jolie, 60 kilometers west of Paris, went viral on social media late on Thursday, prompting public outrage.

"Over the past few days, the students have been joined by about 100 hooded youths armed with clubs and incendiary devices and determined to pick a fight with police," Interior Minister Christophe Castaner told a news conference. (Reuters)

### Yemen Government Proposes Reopening Sanaa Airport If Planes Inspected

STOCKHOLM - Saudi-backed government has proposed reopening the Houthi-held airport in the capital Sanaa on condition planes are first inspected in the airports of Aden or Sayun which are under its control, two government officials said on Friday.

The proposal was made at the U.N.-sponsored Yemen peace talks which started on Thursday in Sweden. (Reuters)



### Merkel's Party Chooses Successor to Longtime German Leader



HAMBURG, Germany - Chancellor Angela Merkel's party is meet-

ing Friday to elect a new leader who could help shape Germany's politi-

cal direction for the next generation. A close ally of Merkel's

and a one-time rival are considered favorites for the job to lead the center-right Christian Democratic Union.

Merkel announced in October she would give up the reins in her party, though she has said she plans to remain chancellor until the end of the current term in 2021. However, it's possible elections could be called before then.

Three high-profile contenders have spent the last month touring Germany to drum up support. (Fox News)

### 'Our Airplanes Are Safe,' Boeing Says as Officials Push Training

JAKARTA/SEATTLE - Aviation authorities in Indonesia and India on Thursday pushed for more simulator training for Boeing Co (BA.N) 737 MAX pilots following the deadly Lion Air crash, while the world's largest planemaker reiterated that its top-selling jetliner was safe. Boeing Chief Executive Officer Dennis Muilenburg told a CNBC interviewer on Thursday he was "very confident" in the safety of the 737 MAX, the newest version of a jet that has been a fixture of

passenger travel for decades.

"We know our airplanes are safe," Muilenburg said. "We have not changed our design philosophy."

Muilenburg's comments came the same day that India's aviation regulator said 737 MAX pilots should be trained on a simulator that replicates the suspected scenario that led to the crash, while Indonesia's Transport Ministry said it would immediately impose new requirements for simulator training. (Reuters)

### Russia: U.S. Protests Over INF Treaty Pave Way to End of START Pact

MILAN - Russia believes the United States is ultimately trying to ruin the New START nuclear weapons treaty by moving to exit the Cold War-era Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Friday.

A senior U.S. official said on Thursday that Russia must scrap its 9M729 nuclear-capable cruise missiles and launchers or modify the weapons' range to return to compliance with the 1987 INF treaty and avert a U.S. pullout from the pact.

"The impression is given that the ground is simply being prepared for this document (New START) also to be ruined as a result," Lavrov told reporters at a news conference in Milan. (Reuters)

### Ukraine Accuses Russia of Blockading Kerch Strait

MINSK, Belarus - Ukraine is accusing Russia of keeping up the blockade of the Kerch Strait that links the Black Sea with the Sea of Azov. The Ukrainian Border Guard Service said Friday that more than 140 ships were stuck on both sides of the strait due to excessive checks and delays on the Russian side. Officials accused Russia of creating a bottleneck for Ukrainian ships and preventing them from passing.

Tensions between Russia and Ukraine flared last month when Russian border guards opened fire on three Ukrainian navy vessels that were moving through the Kerch Strait and seized them and their crews.

The Nov. 25 incident in the Black Sea was the latest escalation in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine that began in 2014 when Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean peninsula. (AP)

### North Korea Tells China It's Committed to Denuclearization

BEIJING - North Korea's foreign minister said his country remains committed to ending its nuclear weapons program in talks Friday with his Chinese counterpart, according to China's foreign ministry.

The talks in Beijing between Ri Yong Ho and Wang Yi came amid a lack of progress in international efforts to persuade North Korea to reverse its drive to build a nuclear arsenal.

China is North Korea's most important ally, but has agreed to increasingly strict United Nations economic sanctions over its programs to develop nuclear



weapons and the ballistic missiles to deliver them.

Ri told Wang that North Korea is "committed to realizing denuclearization and safeguarding the peace and stability of the (Korean) peninsula," ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told reporters at a daily briefing.

In the talks, Ri was also expected to have been briefed on discussions last week between Chinese President Xi Jinping and U.S. President Donald Trump, who recently said his next meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un would likely happen in January or February. (Fox News)

### Duterte Seeks Martial Law Extension in Southern Philippines

MANILA, Philippines - Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has asked Congress to extend martial law in the country's south by another year amid continuing concerns over possible militant attacks, although democracy advocates fear it could worsen human rights conditions.

Presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo said Friday that ending martial law could undermine

progress by government forces in quelling insurgents "and may even strengthen the rebellion and propel it to other parts of the country."

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said he, along the military and police, backed the extension of martial law in the country's southern third, because Muslim extremists, including five to 10 foreign fighters, continue to plot bombings and other attacks. (Fox News)

### Shrinking Japan Okes Divisive Bill to Get More Foreign Labor

TOKYO - Japan is set to approve legislation that would officially open the door to foreign workers to do unskilled jobs and possibly eventually become citizens.

Lawmakers were due to vote late Friday on a government proposal to allow hundreds of thousands of foreign laborers to live and work in a country that has long resisted accepting outsiders. It's seen as an unavoidable step as the country's population of about 126 million rapidly ages and shrinks. Many short-handed industries, especially in the services sector, already rely heavily on foreign "trainees" and language students. The country also selectively grants visas to white-collar professionals, often from the west. Bringing in foreign laborers is a last resort after Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's ultra-conservative government tried to meet labor shortages by encouraging more employment of women and older workers and using more robots and other automation.

"Japan has come to a point where we had to face the reality that there is serious depopulation and serious aging," said Toshihiro Menju, an expert on foreign labor and population issue at Japan Center for International Exchange.

"Shortages of workers are so serious ... that (allowing) immigrants is the only option the government can take," he said. Abe's latest plan calls for relaxing Japan's visa requirements in sectors facing severe labor shortages such as construction, nursing, farming, transport and tourism — new categories of jobs to be added to the current list of highly skilled professionals. (AP)