

MSF Slams Saudi-Led Probe into Yemen Clinic Bombing That Sought to Shift Blame on the NGO

SANAQA - Doctors Without Borders (MSF) has demanded the reopening of an investigation into the Saudi-led bombing of one of its clinics in Yemen. The organization claims the reporting team sent by Riyadh made "false" allegations about it. MSF expressed its "dismay" at the report delivered by the Joint Incidents Assessment Team (JIAT), a body set up by the Saudi and Emirati governments to look into cases where their warplanes hit non-military targets. The report covered the June 11 bombing of a Cholera Treatment Centre (CTC) ran by MSF in the northern Yemeni town of Abs. While no one was injured in the strike, it rendered the clinic "non-functional." It is one of five MSF medical facilities



ties to have been destroyed by airstrikes since the coalition began its airstrikes in 2015. Announced with little fanfare in January, JIAT's

findings acknowledged that the Coalition was "partially responsible" for the bombing. However, it also apportioned much of the

blame towards MSF, claiming it had not explicitly requested to be placed on a no-strike list, nor had it properly displayed a distinctive emblem. These failures, the report argues, led to the clinic being considered a legitimate target.

Disputing these findings, MSF said the facility had displayed three distinctive logos, including one on the roof. It said it also shared the clinic's GPS coordinates with the Coalition on at least 12 occasions. Noting that medical facilities were protected under international law, Teresa Sancristoval, Operations Director for MSF, said it was the "sole responsibility" of warring parties in the conflict to ensure such facilities were not attacked. (RT)

Neighbor News

Iran FM Says Situation in Syria's Idlib 'Very Dangerous'

TEHRAN - Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has warned about the current situation in the militant-held Idlib province in northwestern Syria, describing it as "very dangerous". "The situation in the Syrian province [of Idlib] is very dangerous, and the Nusra Front terrorist group - which is not part of a de-escalation zone - is controlling a majority of the province's regions," Zarif said in an exclusive interview with RT Arabic Thursday.

He said the situation of Idlib is to be discussed during the upcoming meeting between the leaders and foreign ministers of Iran, Russia, and Turkey in the Black Sea resort city of Sochi on February 14. The tripartite summit, whose main purpose is to provide further coordination among the three countries, will be held before the 12th round of Astana talks in the Kazakh capital, Astana.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova on Thursday demanded Turkey do more to tackle militants in Idlib

and fulfill promises it made as part of a deal with Moscow last year. Turkey and Russia brokered a deal in September to create a demilitarized zone in Idlib that would be evacuated of all heavy weapons and militants.

Speaking at a news conference in Moscow, Zakharova said the situation there was rapidly deteriorating and that militant fighters were trying to seize control of the entire de-escalation zone.

"Given the extremely difficult situation in the Idlib de-escalation zone, we expect our Turkish partners to activate their efforts to ultimately turn the tide and to fully carry out the obligations they took upon themselves," she said.

The militants "continue stockpiling toxic chemicals along the entire line of contact with the Syrian armed forces. We noted media reports that militants of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham recently delivered several tanks with chlorine from Jisr ash-Shugur to Khan Shaykhun in the south of Idlib Province," she said. (Press TV)

Israel's Interim Defense Minister Netanyahu Banned from Posing with IDF Troops Ahead of Elections

JERUSALEM - The Israeli Attorney-General has banned Benjamin Netanyahu and his ruling party from delivering political speeches to IDF troops or from publishing photos and videos featuring the PM with Israeli soldiers until after the election. Canvassing the support of the military three months prior to the polls is forbidden by Israeli election law, so as not to confuse the public that the IDF might be backing a specific candidate. Ahead of the general election on April 9, the

Labor Party (HaAvoda) filed a petition with the Israeli Attorney-General accusing Netanyahu of exploiting his post as Acting Defense Minister for campaign purposes. The opposition party claimed that Netanyahu and his Likud Party's "cold, cynical and narrow" use of pictures with soldiers on social media as well as in the press "misleads the voting public into thinking that the Israel Defense Force completely identifies with the Likud's election campaign." (RT)

Time for Talks 'Long Passed': US Weaponizes Aid Amid Push for Regime Change in Venezuela

CARACAS - As trucks with US "humanitarian aid" arrived at the Colombia-Venezuela border, the State Department insisted that time for talks with the government in Caracas is long past, and the only acceptable outcome is regime change.

US President Donald Trump recognized opposition politician Juan Guaido as "legitimate president" of Venezuela last month. The State Department appointed neo-conservative interventionist Elliott Abrams - who has a long and checkered

past of meddling in Latin America - as its special envoy for freedom and democracy in Venezuela. On Thursday, Abrams told reporters at the State Department that Washington was not interested in any talks with Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.

"The time for dialogue with Maduro has long passed," he said, asserting that Maduro would "manipulate" any negotiations to his advantage. Meanwhile, the trucks loaded with US "humanitarian aid" intended



for Guaido and his supporters have arrived at Cucuta, on the Colombia-Venezuela border. The Venezuelan military, which remains loyal to Maduro's government, has blockaded the bridge on the other side, however. (RT)

Staging A Coup? Get Rid of ALL Politicians & Kill New Leaders Who 'F*** Up' - Duterte to Troops



MANILA - Philippines leader Rodrigo Duterte advised his armed forces to get rid of the establishment next time they stage a coup and to bring young

blood to politics instead, on the condition that they'd all be killed if they "f*** up."

"Drop all politicians, including me. I can al-

ways go home to Davao swimming," Duterte said Thursday, during the swearing-in of newly appointed government officials in Malacanang, once again urging the military not to hesitate to oust him from power if they doubt his leadership.

The main "problem" with mutinies, Duterte pointed out, is that military coups usually only result in the appointment of seasoned opposition figures to top seats. So instead of "wasting" their time and effort, the president suggested the potential military

coup plotters should pick around a dozen "bright young leaders" and propel the "best" to run the Philippines.

The young prospects should be given a good salary and be rewarded for their endeavors, but must be aware they won't live long if they abuse their newly-gained power, Duterte believes. This was not the first time the president dined the military to determine the political future in the Philippines. He made similar remarks as recently as last September. (RT)

North Korea Pushing Flag at Center of New Loyalty Campaign

PYONGYANG, North Korea - North Korea is stepping up a new loyalty campaign as leader Kim Jong Un prepares for his second summit with President Donald Trump. The campaign began last month with the introduction of a song in praise of the nation's flag.

A video now being aired on state-run television to promote the song - called "Our National Flag" - shows repeated images of the flag being raised at international sports competitions and being formed by a sea of

people holding up colored lengths of cloth at a parade and rally on Kim Il Sung Square. Other images show recent improvements in the economy and standard of living, a reflection of a current government policy shift that focuses on development and prosperity.

The video is a departure from the tone of the propaganda that dominated just two years ago, when tensions with Washington were escalating and the focus was on North Korea's successful missile tests. (AP)

France: Italy Ambassador Recall Is an Important Warning

PARIS - France kept up pressure on Italy Friday amid their biggest diplomatic spat since World War II, as business leaders from both countries appealed to their leaders to restore calm. France's government spokesman said the recall of its ambassador to Italy is temporary, but sends an important signal to its historical ally not to meddle in internal French affairs. (AP)

Colombia Cancels Entrance Cards for 300 Venezuelan Maduro Supporters

BOGOTA - Colombia's migration office on Friday said it canceled over 300 daily entrance passes for Venezuelan politicians and their families who support President Nicolas Maduro. Colombia has borne the brunt of the exodus of Venezuelans fleeing malnutrition and political turmoil in their once-prosperous nation, with about 800,000 flooding over the border and settling in Colombia.

"It doesn't make sense that while (they) migrate by hunger and necessity, supporters of the dictatorship enjoy these benefits and enter our country, using this card, to shop, among other things," Christian Kruger, the head of the migration agency, said in a statement.

Trucks carrying humanitarian aid for Venezuela arrived in the Colombian border city of Cucuta on Thursday even as Maduro refused them entry, blocking the Tienditas bridge amid an escalating political crisis. (Reuters)

Greek Parliament Set to Back Macedonia's NATO Accession

ATHENS, Greece - Greek lawmakers are set to approve Macedonia's NATO accession, ending a process to normalize relations between the two neighbors and anchor the country - renamed North Macedonia - firmly within the western sphere of influence.

Greek opposition parties reject the move, arguing that the name deal, which will end a 27-year dispute, concedes too much to Macedonia. But the left-led government in Athens controls enough seats in parliament to win the vote, expected late Friday.

Greece and the former Yugoslav province - independent since 1991 - struck the historic agreement last summer. Despite strong misgivings from opposition parties and public opinion, both ratified it in parliament. Greek approval of Macedonia's NATO accession bid is the final step in the deal. Macedonia will then formally implement the name change. (Fox News)



Fiancee Hopes Saudi Writer's Killers Will be Punished

ISTANBUL - The fiancée of slain Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi says she hopes that his killers will be punished and has appealed to legislators in the European Union and the U.S. Congress to closely follow the case.

Speaking Friday at the launch of a book about the journalist, Hatice Cengiz also said she believes that Saudi King Salman "has a conscience" and will support Turkey's efforts to shed light on his killing.

Cengiz spoke a day after U.N. human rights expert Agnes Callamard said Saudi Arabia had undermined Turkey's efforts to investigate the death, which she described as a "brutal and premeditated killing."

Khashoggi, a Washington Post columnist who wrote critically about Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, was killed inside the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul on Oct. 2. (Fox News)

Ebadi Urges World Action to Weaken Iran Rulers on Revolution Anniversary

PARIS/LONDON - Iranian Nobel Peace Prize winner Shirin Ebadi said she first had doubts about the 1979 Islamic Revolution when members of the Shah's regime were executed on the rooftop of a school housing its leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

She has emerged as one of the most outspoken critics of Iran's clerical leadership, 40 years after Khomeini returned from exile in Paris on a special Air France flight to ecstatic crowds on Feb. 1, 1979.

But as Iran commemorates the rise of Khomeini, who won the support of millions opposed to the U.S.-backed Shah's lavish lifestyle and ruthless secret police, her criticisms of its current rulers are compounded by frustrations about U.S. policy.

U.S. sanctions designed to undermine Iran's ruling theocracy have only hurt ordinary Iranians who face widespread hardships, said Ebadi, a human rights lawyer and former judge who has been living in exile in Britain since 2009.

"The economic sanctions are not to the benefit of the people. They make the people poor," she told Reuters.

"However, those who are close to the regime benefit from economic sanctions because it gives them the opportunity to gain dirty money. So it's good for them." (Reuters)

Baku to Host First Meeting of High-Level Working Group on Caspian Sea Issues

BAKU - Baku will host the first meeting of the representative of Azerbaijan in the High-Level Working Group for the Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea to be held Feb. 19-20 with the participation of representatives of the Caspian littoral states, Trend reports with reference to Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry Feb. 8.

A number of issues arising from the Convention, as well as the results of the Fifth Summit of the Heads of the Caspian littoral States in Aktau, are expected to be discussed at the meeting.

At the event, Azerbaijan will be represented by the delegation led by Khalaf Khalafov, chief of the Staff of the Cabinet of Ministers

of Azerbaijan and the representative of Azerbaijan in the High-Level Working Group for the Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea.

On August 12, 2018, the "Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea" was signed in Aktau, Kazakhstan and the Communiqué of the Fifth Caspian Summit was adopted.

Based on these documents, in order to effectively implement the Convention and review cooperation issues in the Caspian Sea, the High-Level Working Group for the Caspian Sea has been established as a regular five-sided consultation mechanism consisting of authorized representatives of the Caspian littoral states. (Trend)

Turkmenistan, Tunisia to Hold Political Consultations

ASHGABAT - Turkmen Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov will visit Tunisia Feb. 7-9, 2019 to conduct political consultations, Trend reports referring to the president's decree. The sides will also dis-

uss the issues of bilateral cooperation. The Turkmen and Tunisian foreign ministers will exchange views on current spheres of partnership within the UN and other authoritative international structures. (Trend)