

Arab Parliament president praises King Salman's position on Israel's Jordan valley threat

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1568474930914846600

Sat, 2019-09-14 18:27

RIYADH: The president of the Arab Parliament has praised King Salman's position on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's announcement that he will annex the Jordan Valley if he is re-elected on Tuesday.

Mishaal bin Fahm Al-Salami also welcomed King Salman's call for an emergency Organization of Islamic Cooperation foreign minister's meeting on the issue. He told Saudi Press Agency that the king's stance has highlighted the responsibilities of the entire international community to "take decisive and effective measures to stop Israel's expansionist policies."

Netanyahu sparked widespread condemnation after pledging on Tuesday to annex the strategic Jordan Valley, which accounts for around a third of the occupied West Bank.



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Palestinians praise King Salman's 'patriotic position'What Israel's Jordan Valley annexation plan means for a Palestinian state

Trump discusses possible mutual defense treaty with Israel's Netanyahu

Sat, 2019-09-14 18:46

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump said on Saturday he had spoken with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu about a possible mutual defense treaty between the two nations, a move that could bolster Netanyahu's re-election bid just days before Israelis go to the polls.

"I had a call today with Prime Minister Netanyahu to discuss the possibility of moving forward with a Mutual Defense Treaty, between the United States and Israel, that would further anchor the tremendous alliance between our two countries," Trump said on Twitter.

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– Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) [September 14, 2019](#)

He added that he looked forward to continuing those discussions later this month on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly session in New York.

The timing of Trump's tweet, just days before Israel's election on Tuesday, appeared aimed at buttressing Netanyahu's effort to remain in power by showcasing his close ties to Trump.

Opinion polls predict a close race, five months after an inconclusive election in which Netanyahu declared himself the winner but failed to put together a coalition government.

Netanyahu's Likud party is running neck-and-neck with the centrist Blue and White party led by former armed forces chief Benny Gantz, who has focused heavily on looming corruption charges Netanyahu faces.

Trump previously bolstered Netanyahu's candidacy when he recognized Israel's claim of sovereignty over the Golan Heights ahead of the elections earlier

this year.

Some Israeli officials have promoted the idea of building on Netanyahu's strong ties to the Trump administration by forging a new defense treaty with the United States, focused especially on guarantees of assistance in any conflict with Iran.

But some of Netanyahu's critics have argued that such an agreement could tie Israel's hands and deny it military autonomy.



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What Israel's Jordan Valley annexation plan means for a Palestinian state
Netanyahu sparks anger with vow to annex Jordan Valley

[Egypt officials: Attack kills 3 soldiers, 3 militants in Sinai](#)

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BY ASHRAF SWEILLAM | AP

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1568471418724435000

Sat, 2019-09-14 13:04

EL-ARISH: Egyptian security officials said at least three soldiers and three militants have been killed in a militant attack on a checkpoint in the restive northern Sinai province.

They said the militants opened fire Saturday on the Mahajr checkpoint in the coastal city of El-Arish, and that the attack also wounded two soldiers. The officials said the soldiers chased the militants and killed three of them. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak to the media.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

Egypt has for years been battling a long-running insurgency in North Sinai that is now led by an affiliate of Daesh. The fighting intensified in 2013 after the military overthrew an elected but divisive Islamist president.



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Egypt's El-Sisi defends military against corruption claims
Teen Egyptian girl's case puts legal system under spotlight

Egypt's El-Sisi defends military against corruption claims

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Sat, 2019-09-14 13:50

CAIRO: Egypt's president is refuting corruption allegations raised by a businessman about the country's military in a series of recorded testimonials that went viral on social media.

Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi said Saturday that allegations of embezzlement and misuse of public funds in building new presidential palaces are "sheer lies and defamation."

He said: "I've built presidential palaces and I will continue to do so. I am building a new country. ... All of this is not mine. It's Egypt's."

El-Sisi was responding to claims by contractor Mohammed Ali, who said he worked for the military for 15 years, alleging massive spending, abuse by authorities and misuse of public funds.

He has denied the allegations without elaborating. He has called the claims against the military an attempt to topple Egypt.



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Trump confirms death of Al-Qaeda heir Hamza bin Laden

Sat, 2019-09-14 16:20

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Saturday confirmed that Hamza bin Laden, the son and designated heir of Al-Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden, was killed in a counter-terrorism operation along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

US media reported in late July and early August, citing intelligence officials, that the younger Bin Laden had been killed sometime in the last two years in an operation that involved the United States.

Secretary of Defense Mark Esper confirmed the death last month, saying it was "his understanding" that Bin Laden was dead, but Trump and other senior officials had not publicly confirmed the news.

"Hamza bin Laden, the high-ranking al-Qaeda member and son of Osama bin Laden, was killed in a United States counterterrorism operation in the Afghanistan/Pakistan region," Trump said in a brief statement issued by the White House.

"The loss of Hamza bin Laden not only deprives Al-Qaeda of important leadership skills and the symbolic connection to his father, but undermines important operational activities of the group."

The statement did not specify the timing of the operation.

The 15th of Osama bin Laden's 20 children and a son of his third wife, Hamza, thought to be about 30 years old, was "emerging as a leader in the Al-Qaeda franchise," the State Department said in announcing a \$1 million bounty on his head in February 2019 – perhaps after his actual demise.

He had put out audio and video messages calling for attacks on the United States and other countries, especially to avenge his father's killing by US forces in Pakistan in May 2011, the department said.

That work made him important in attracting a new generation of followers to the extremist group that carried out the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, which left nearly 3,000 dead.

Osama bin Laden's death and the rise of Daesh saw Al-Qaeda lose currency with younger extremists.

But the proliferation of branches and associated extremist groups in Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria and elsewhere have underscored its continuing potency.

Documents seized in the raid on his father's house in Abbottabad, Pakistan suggested Hamza was being groomed as heir to the Al-Qaeda leadership.

US forces also found a video of Hamza's wedding to the daughter of another senior Al-Qaeda official that is believed to have taken place in Iran. In 2017, Hamza was placed on the US terror blacklist, seen as a potent future figurehead for the group then led by Ayman al-Zawahiri.



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Hamza bin Laden killed in airstrike on Afghan-Pakistani border