

Israel: Arrow-3 anti-missile system passed live test in US

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Sun, 2019-07-28 08:15

JERUSALEM: Israel's US-backed Arrow-3 air defense system, billed as a bullwark against the ballistic missiles fielded by Iran and Syria, has passed a live interception test in Alaska, the Israeli Defense Ministry said on Sunday.

Jointly manufactured by Boeing Co, Arrow-3 is billed as capable of destroying missiles in space, an altitude that would destroy any non-conventional warheads safely. It passed the first full interception test over the Mediterranean sea in 2015 and was deployed in Israel in 2017.



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Israel fires missiles into south SyriaSaudi Arabia urges UN to halt 'flagrant

Iran says European naval mission in Gulf would be 'provocative'

Sun, 2019-07-28 10:49

TEHRAN: Iran on Sunday slammed as "provocative" a British proposal for a European-led naval mission to escort tankers in the Gulf, amid soaring tensions over the seizure of ships.

"We heard that they intend to send a European fleet to the Arabian Gulf which naturally carries a hostile message, is provocative and will increase tensions," government spokesman Ali Rabiei said, quoted by ISNA news agency.

The statements come as the head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, Ali Akbar Salehi, told lawmakers on Sunday that Iran will restart activities at the Arak heavy water nuclear reactor, the ISNA news agency reported. ISNA cited a member of parliament who attended the meeting. Heavy water can be employed in reactors to produce plutonium, a fuel used in nuclear warheads.

In May, Iran announced planned measures to breach the nuclear agreement with major world powers following the US withdrawal from deal and Washington's reimposition of tough sanctions.

On July 3, President Hassan Rouhani said Tehran would increase its uranium enrichment levels and start to revive its Arak heavy-water reactor after July 7 if the nations in the nuclear pact did not protect trade with Iran promised under the deal but blocked by the US sanctions.



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Iranian exiles rally in London to demand regime change in Tehran

[Iraq Kurds accuse PKK of Turkish envoy's murder](#)

Author:

Sat, 2019-07-27 23:02

ERBIL, IRAQ: The authorities in Iraqi Kurdistan have accused Turkish Kurdish rebels of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) of ordering the July 17 murder of the Turkish vice-consul in regional capital Erbil.

The federal government in Baghdad has often blamed the PKK for carrying out attacks against Turkish targets from its rear bases in Iraq's northern mountains but a statement issued late on Friday was a rare accusation against

their fellow Kurds by the autonomous regional authorities.

The PKK's armed wing had denied responsibility for the assassination. But the Iraqi Kurdish authorities said that based on a detailed confession by the suspected Turkish Kurdish gunman, Mazloun Dag, 27, the murder was carried out on the orders of top PKK commanders.

Turkish Vice-Consul Osman Kose was gunned down with two Iraqis while they dined on a restaurant terrace in Erbil.

Iraqi Kurdish security services said that the murder had been three months in the planning by PKK commanders in their heavily fortified hideouts in Iraq's Qandil mountains.

They said they had arrested three Turkish and three Iraqi suspects.

Dag's arrest last Saturday was immediately seized on by the Turkish media as his sister Dersim is a member of Parliament for Turkey's main pro-Kurdish party, the People's Democratic Party (HDP).

The HDP, the country's second largest opposition group, is regularly accused by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of links to the outlawed PKK.

The HDP "strongly" condemned the Erbil attack, calling it an "absolutely unacceptable provocation attempt."

In May, Turkey launched a major ground offensive and bombing campaign against the PKK in Qandil, the latest of many in the military's three-and-a-half decade campaign against the rebels.

Analysts have suggested the attack on the Turkish diplomat might have been carried out in retaliation for the killing of several PKK commanders in the latest bombing campaign.

Following Kose's murder, Turkey broadened its cross-border operations, launching airstrikes against PKK bases and members in the Kurdish-held Makhmur area south of Iraq's second city Mosul.



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Iraqi Kurds arrest suspects in killing of Turkish vice consul Turkish diplomat and two others killed in northern Iraq restaurant attack

[Sudan says 87 killed when security forces broke up protest in June](#)

Author:

Reuters

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Sat, 2019-07-27 12:11

KHARTOUM, July 27 (Reuters) – The head of a Sudanese investigative committee said on Saturday that 87 people were killed and 168 wounded on June 3 when a sit-in protest was violently broken up by security forces.

Fath al-Rahman Saeed, the head of the committee, told a news conference that

17 of those killed were in the square occupied by protesters and 48 of the wounded were hit by bullets.

Some security forces fired at protesters and three officers violated orders by moving forces into the sit-in, he said, adding that an order was also issued to whip protesters.

Opposition medics have said 127 people were killed and 400 wounded in the dispersal, while the Health Ministry had put the death toll at 61. The sit-in outside the Defence Ministry in the capital Khartoum was a focal point for protests that led to the ouster of long-time President Omar al-Badri on April 11.

"Some outlaws exploited this gathering and formed another gathering in what is known as the Columbia area, where negative and illegal practices took place," Saeed said.

"It became a security threat, forcing the authorities to make necessary arrangements to clear the area," he said.



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Sudan protest leaders, rebels end rift over power deal

Air strikes kill 15 civilians in northwest Syria

Author:

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Sat, 2019-07-27 14:32

BEIRUT: Regime and Russian air strikes Saturday killed 15 civilians, more than half of them children, in northwestern Syria where ramped up attacks by the two allies have claimed hundreds of lives since April.

Idlib and parts of the neighbouring provinces of Aleppo, Hama and Latakia are under the control of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, a jihadist group led by Syria's former Al-Qaeda affiliate.

The region is supposed to be protected from a massive government offensive by a September buffer zone deal, but it has come under increasing bombardment by the regime and its Russian ally over the past three months.

In the Idlib town of Ariha, seven children were among 11 civilians killed in Syrian air strikes that targeted two residential buildings and also wounded 28 other people, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

One of the dead was a small boy who was found under the rubble by White Helmets rescuers, his face bloodied and his body covered in white dust, a photographer who works with AFP said from the scene.

He also witnessed rescuers digging through the rubble of a collapsed roof for more victims, while a member of the White Helmets moved the body of a young man into the back of a pickup truck.

Ariha made headlines after it was pummelled Wednesday by warplanes that claimed the lives of 10 civilians, according to the Observatory, when a picture of three sisters struggling for their lives went viral on social media networks.

The picture showed two dust-covered girls trapped in the rubble and clutching their baby sister by her shirt as she dangles from a bombed out building.

One of the girls later died of her wounds while the other two are hospitalised and fighting to stay alive, according to local medics.

Russian air strikes on northern Hama province Saturday that hit an ambulance killed three rescuers while another child died in Syrian regime bombardment elsewhere in the Idlib region, the Observatory said.

Save the Children said on Thursday that the number of children killed in Idlib over the past four weeks had exceeded the number slain in the same region in the whole of last year.

Air strikes by the Syrian regime and its ally Russia on the Idlib region have claimed more than 740 lives since late April, according to the war monitor.

The UN says more than 400,000 people have been displaced.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has documented 39 attacks against health facilities or medical workers in the area in three months.

At least 50 schools have been damaged by air strikes and shelling over the same period, it said.

UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet on Friday condemned “international indifference” in the face of the mounting death toll in Idlib.

“These are civilian objects, and it seems highly unlikely, given the persistent pattern of such attacks, that they are all being hit by accident,” Bachelet said.

“Intentional attacks against civilians are war crimes, and those who have ordered them or carried them out are criminally responsible for their actions,” she said.

The region under attack is home to some three million people, nearly half of them already displaced from other parts of the country.

The war in Syria has killed more than 370,000 people and displaced millions since it started in 2011 with a brutal crackdown on anti-government protests.



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Syrian refugees in Turkey ‘detained’ and ‘forced’ to return to conflict zones