

Local

Kuwait stresses 'safe' return of Syrian detainees, missing persons

Kuwait renews call for Yemeni parties to resume negotiations

NEW YORK: Kuwait stressed the importance of achieving "real and tangible" progress in the Syrian detainees and missing persons' file, allowing international organizations to visit detention centers and prisons. This came during a speech by Kuwait's Permanent Delegate to the UN Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi on Friday evening during a session of the Security Council on the Syrian political track. He confirmed Kuwait's supportive position toward the safe, voluntary and dignified return of Syrian refugees.

In the speech, Otaibi pointed to "the important progress witnessed in the Syrian political process, namely the holding of the first round of meetings of the Syrian Constitutional Committee." In this regard, he praised the efforts of the UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen during this year, "which contributed to reaching an agreement on the committee. "We followed the work of this committee, which met through its enlarged body of 150 members, and also with its 45-member mini-body in Geneva during the first half of this month," he said. "We should commend the Syrian parties for taking this pivotal step and participating in the committee's work," hoping that dialogue prevails and parties engage in constructive discussions leading to understandings on the Syrian constitution.

He urged all parties to join efforts and work to achieve their legitimate aspirations, and the unity, independence, sovereignty, and integrity of Syria in accordance with resolution 2254 and the Geneva Declaration of 2012. He renewed Kuwait's support for the

work of the independent and impartial international mechanism, as well as the commission of inquiry established by the Secretary General of the United Nations, which was recently launched.

Otaibi expressed concerns over developments in northwestern Syria, and condemnation of targeting innocent civilians, pointing to a statement issued by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the "alarming figures" it contained about the number of children killed, which exceeded 1,100 in 2018-2019. He reiterated the call for the necessity of a ceasefire throughout Syria as stipulated in Security Council resolutions, in particular Resolution 2401.

On the other hand, Otaibi affirmed his condemnation of the repeated Israeli attacks on the sovereignty and territories of Syria, in violation of the UN Charter and international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions, including Resolution 350. He also stressed that there is no military solution to the Syrian conflict but a political settlement in accordance with Resolution 2254, which laid out a roadmap for a political transition. The transitional phase includes several stations, including the drafting of a constitution and the holding of free elections under the auspices of the UN and includes all Syrians, including those abroad.

Yemeni negotiations

Meanwhile, Otaibi on Friday expressed hope that the Riyadh Agreement will help pave the way to a comprehensive political resolution of the conflict in Yemen.

Addressing a UN Security Council session on the situation in Yemen, he invited them to further peace negotiations in Kuwait. "We meet here today while positive and constructive indications are gaining momentum towards solving the Yemeni crisis," Ambassador Otaibi pointed out. "On top of these indications are the signing of Riyadh Agreement by the Yemeni government and the Transitional Southern Council on November 5," he said, appreciating the mediation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the deal. "The deal signals the commitment of Saudi Arabia and the partners in the Coalition to restore legitimacy in Yemen to stabilize the country. Under this deal, the Yemeni government was able to resume its operations in Aden, the interim capital city of the country," he said.

Ambassador Otaibi welcomed the drop in military operations inside Hodeidah and the resumption of humanitarian aid deliveries. However, he regretted that United Nations experts are still unable to carry out the necessary inspection of a floating oil tanker in the Red Sea, the condition of which may result in an imminent environmental disaster. He demanded that all parties allow humanitarian agencies to carry out their work without restrictions, noting that the State of Kuwait has pledged \$600 million to Yemen since the conflict began. "Out of Kuwait's total aid pledges, \$350 million have been delivered to the UN aid agencies," he stated. He voiced hope that the implementation of Riyadh Agreement would lay the groundwork for confidence building, initiating a



HAZZANU: Children play with the frame of a tent at a camp for the displaced near the town of Hazzanu, about 20 kilometers northwest of the city of Idlib, on September 30, 2019. — AFP

comprehensive political settlement to crisis of Yemen, and opening new horizons for the implementation of the Stockholm Accord, the GCC initiative for Yemen, the outcomes of the national dialogue and the UN Security Council resolution 2216.

Somalia's unity

Separately, Kuwait reiterated calling on the international community to support the sovereignty and unity of Somalia. This came during a speech Otaibi delivered in a meeting of the UN Security Council on Somalia. He welcomed achievements attained on the level of national reconciliation despite challenges facing the Somali federal government

in the process of rebuilding and stabilizing the country. Ambassador Otaibi also praised efforts exerted by the federal government to create conditions for holding general elections by 2020-2021. "Yet, we are concerned over armed militias' growing abilities, especially the ones of Al-Shabab," he said. According to the UN Secretary General's report, worrying developments are taking place regarding Al-Shabab's capabilities of manufacturing explosive devices; a matter that is denounced, especially that those devices are used to target the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), in addition to troops of the UN and international partners, noted the Kuwaiti envoy. — KUNA

Farwaniya houses most 'bachelors' in private residences

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) has listed 800 houses for letting housing units to bachelors in private or model residential areas, and owners have been warned to evict them or have the electricity supply disconnected. MEW explained that electricity was disconnected in 200 of those houses, while the owners of 200 others legalized their status by only letting the units to families. According to MEW statistics, Farwaniya topped all areas in terms of letting housing units to bachelors in private residential areas.

Co-ops' jobs

As part of a plan to replace expats working in co-ops with citizens, the ministry of social affairs and some co-ops recently appointed 527 citizens in leading positions, said informed sources. The sources added that 1,249 jobs had been listed in various co-ops pending replacing expats and filling them with citizens. "42 percent of the jobs are now filled with citizens," the sources added.

Search for railings thief

Hawally security forces located and impounded a vehicle a thief was using to steal aluminum railings from pedestrian footbridges in various areas, said security sources. Notably, a citizen recorded the suspect stealing the railings on video and published it on social media, which triggered a search for the vehicle. It was found abandoned with the stolen items in it in Salwa. Further investigations are in progress to identify the owner and interrogate him. Notably, the suspect will be facing charges of stealing and damaging public property.

Kuwaitis released

Well-informed diplomatic sources stressed that efforts exerted by Kuwait's embassy in Iraq succeeded in releasing three Kuwaitis who had been detained there while hunting in Muthanna governorate. Notably, the three citizens were arrested while hunting in no-hunting zones and were interrogated by Iraqi intelligence. Iraqi authorities had banned hunting in the southern deserts after Qatari hunters were kidnapped there in 2015.

Fire guts Jleeb workshop

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Firefighters battled a blaze that gutted a carpentry workshop in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh yesterday. The flames spread over an area of 400 square meters in the carpentry located inside

the basement of a three-storey building in the area. Firemen evacuated the building before extinguishing the blaze, which helped prevent human injuries. Kuwait Fire Service Directorate said in a statement. An investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the fire.



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