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Houthis sentence 13 to public execution on homosexuality charges – report

February 8, 2024 jpost.com reported: “A court of the Iranian-backed Houthis in Yemen has sentenced 13 people to public execution on homosexuality charges, the French wire service *AFP* reported on Tuesday. Another 35 people have been detained for similar charges.

The ruling was made in Ibb, a Houthi-controlled province from which the jihadist group has been launching attacks on commercial ships in the Red Sea since Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, opening a war that reached its four-month mark this week.

The Houthis have a history of sentencing more people to death than they actually execute, according to a 2022 report by the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor, which counted 350 death sentences by the group since 2014, only 11 of which have resulted in execution. But the group’s attacks on global trade could change this calculus...”

Ukraine calls for ‘urgent’ military help after fresh Russian strikes

February 8, 2024 spacewar.com reported: “Ukraine urged the West on Wednesday to speed up and increase deliveries of artillery shells after a new Russian missile attack on Kyiv and other regions killed four in the capital and wounded more than 40.

Securing the shells has been a priority for Kyiv, which is burning through its reserves as Russia throws more manpower and resources at the frontlines almost two years into its invasion. ‘We will respond to every missile, every Shahed (drone),’ Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said in his daily address, sending condolences to the families of the victims.

‘And our task this year is not only to maximize our air shield and long-range capabilities of Ukraine, but also to inflict maximum systemic losses on Russia,’ he said, after meeting with EU’s top diplomat Josep Borrell.

Ukraine’s commander-in-chief Valery Zaluzhny said Russia used drones, cruise, ballistic and anti-aircraft missiles in the barrage. He said Russia fired 20 drones and 44 missiles in the morning attack — with Ukraine shooting down 15 drones and 29 missiles...”

‘Swarm of suicide drones’ attacks US army base in Syria in retaliation for Baghdad airstrike

February 8, 2024 jpost.com reported: “Explosions have been reported near a US army base in Syria, by the Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese media network *Al Mayadeen*, on Wednesday.

The American base in the Al-Omar oil field in the Kurdish-controlled region of northeastern Syria, close to the city of Deir ez-Zor, American troops have been present here since at least 2017.

The base was attacked by a ‘swarm of suicide drones’ according to Egypt-based Bayan-gate news and is the second attack of its kind this week against US bases in the region. The attack has been linked to the retaliatory US airstrikes against Iranian-aligned groups and their positions, by Arab media.



U.S. Army Drone Swarm

The American airstrikes were a response to the three American servicemembers killed at a base in Jordan, near the Syrian border earlier this week...”

Israel says over a fifth of Hamas hostages are dead, more than previously thought

February 8, 2024 christianpost.com reported: “Israeli intelligence officers have concluded that more than a fifth of the 136 individuals still held hostage by Hamas in Gaza are dead, according to a confidential assessment which found more captives have been killed than expected.

The Israeli military confirmed the deaths of at least 30 of the more than 130 remaining hostages, according to a copy of the intelligence report reviewed by *The New York Times*. Meanwhile, unverified intelligence indicates that around 20 other captives may also be dead if unconfirmed reports prove to be true, four officials told the outlet.

The *NYT* reported Tuesday that the Israeli military said some of the deceased individuals were killed on Oct. 7, the day that Hamas launched its surprise attack against Israel. The assessment didn't state whether hostages were killed by Israeli airstrikes..."

Hamas proposes three-stage ceasefire over 135 days, leading to end of war

February 7, 2024 jpost.com reported: "Hamas has proposed a ceasefire plan that would quiet the guns in Gaza for four-and-a-half months leading to an end to the war, in response to a proposal sent last week by Qatari and Egyptian mediators and backed by the United States and Israel.

According to a draft document seen by *Reuters*, the Hamas counterproposal envisions three phases lasting 45 days each. The proposal would see terrorists exchange the remaining Israeli hostages they captured on Oct. 7 for Palestinian prisoners. The reconstruction of Gaza would begin, Israeli forces would withdraw completely, and bodies and remains would be exchanged..."

Iran could weaponize its uranium in one week, new report says

February 6, 2024 jpost.com reported: "A new report from the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS) is sounding the alarm on Iran's closeness to going nuclear, upgrading its threat level to 'Extreme Danger,' the highest of its six ratings, for the first time since the group began following the Iranian nuclear program in the 1990s.

Since 2022, the report says, Iran's 'breakout' time has been zero—that is to say, Iran 'has more than enough... highly enriched uranium (HEU) to directly fashion a nuclear explosive.' Uranium itself is not the only component required to fashion a nuclear weapon, though it is by far the hardest to come by...the report says.

'[Iran] can break out and produce enough weapon-grade enriched uranium for a nuclear weapon in a week,' it goes on, 'using only a fraction of its 60 percent enriched uranium. This breakout could be difficult for inspectors to detect. Moreover, using its remaining stock of enriched uranium, the country 'could have in total enough weapon-grade uranium for six weapons in one month, and after five months of producing weapon-grade uranium, it could have...twelve...'

Hashed chief demands withdrawal of US-led coalition from Iraq

February 5, 2024 spacewar.com reported: "The head of Iraq's pro-Iran Hashed al-Shaabi alliance on Sunday demanded the withdrawal of US-led coalition forces from the country following deadly strikes.

'They targeted administration offices, a (Hashed) hospital, they struck forces tasked with protecting the borders,' Faleh al-Fayyad said at a funeral ceremony for members of the group killed in the US strikes.

'Targeting the Hashed al-Shaabi is playing with fire,' he warned. On Friday US strikes in the west of Iraq struck positions manned by pro-Iran groups, in response to an attack in January on a base in Jordan that killed three US soldiers.

The Hashed al-Shaabi, mainly pro-Iran paramilitaries now integrated into Iraq's regular security forces, said 16 of its fighters were killed in Friday's strikes and 36 people wounded. 'We urge the prime minister to do everything in his power to defend the sovereignty and dignity of Iraq. And this can only be done with the departure of all coalition forces from Iraq,' Fayyad said..."



Kim inspects warships as North Korea prepares for conflict

February 2, 2024 spacewar.com reported: "North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspected warships at a shipyard in a renewed drive to bolster his naval forces as his country ramps up 'war preparations', state media said Friday. In recent weeks, Kim has declared South Korea his country's 'principal enemy', jettisoned agencies dedicated to reunification and outreach, and threatened war over 'even 0.001 mm' of territorial infringement.

He also recently hailed the test launch of a new strategic cruise missile from a submarine, calling it a key moment in the development of the North's naval power.

'The strengthening of the naval force presents itself as the most important issue in reliably defending the maritime sovereignty of the country and stepping up the war preparations at present,' Kim said at the Nampho Dockyard, according to the *Korean Central News Agency*.

A nuclear-powered submarine was on Kim's strategic weapons wish list set out at a key party congress in 2021, along with a hypersonic warhead, spy satellites and solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missiles..."