

## Food Aid Stolen as Yemen Starves

TAIZ, Yemen - Day after day Nabil al-Hakimi, a humanitarian official in Taiz, one of Yemen's largest cities, went to work feeling he had a "mountain" on his shoulders. Billions of dollars in food and other foreign aid was coming into his war-ravaged homeland, but millions of Yemenis were still living a step away from famine.

Reports of organizational disarray and out-and-out thievery streamed in to him this spring and summer from around Taiz - 5,000 sacks of rice doled out without record of where they'd gone... 705 food baskets looted from a welfare agency's warehouses... 110 sacks of grain pilaged from trucks trying to make their way through the craggy northern highlands overlooking the city.



Food donations, it was clear, were being snatched from the starving.

Documents reviewed by The Associated Press and interviews with al-Hakimi and other officials and aid workers show that thousands of

families in Taiz are not getting international food aid intended for them - often because it has been seized by armed units that are allied with the Saudi-led, American-backed military coalition fighting in Yemen.

"The army that should protect the aid is looting the aid," al-Hakimi told the AP.

Across Yemen, factions and militias on all sides of the conflict have blocked food aid from going to groups suspected of disloyalty, diverted it to front-line combat units or sold it for profit on the black market, according to public records and confidential documents obtained by the AP and interviews with more than 70 aid workers, government officials and average citizens from six different provinces.

The problem of lost and stolen aid is common in Taiz and other areas controlled by Yemen's internationally recognized government, which is supported by the Saudi-led military coalition. (Fox News)

### Senator: Trump Slowing Down Troop Pullout from Syria

WASHINGTON - President Donald Trump has ordered a slowdown to the withdrawal of U.S. forces in Syria, Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham said Sunday.

"I think we're in a pause situation," the South Carolina Republican said outside the White House after lunch with the president. Trump announced earlier this month that he was ordering the withdrawal of all the roughly 2,000 troops from war-torn Syria, with aides expecting it to take place swiftly.

The president had declared victory over the Islamic

State group in Syria, though pockets of fighting remain.

Graham had been an outspoken critic of Trump's decision, which had drawn bipartisan criticism. The announcement also had shocked lawmakers and American allies, including Kurds who have fought alongside the U.S. against the Islamic State group and face an expected assault by Turkey.

"I think we're slowing things down in a smart way," Graham said, adding that Trump was very aware of the plight of the Kurds. (AP)

### Russia Reportedly Detains American over Suspected Spying

MOSCOW - An American citizen was arrested in Russia on Friday for alleged spying, Russia's domestic security agency announced Monday, marking one of the country's first overt tit-for-tat actions after several high-profile Russia-related indictments in the U.S.

Paul Whelan was taken into custody after allegedly being caught "during an act of espionage," although Russia's Federal Security Service, the country's primary internal security arm, gave no

further details about the alleged incident, the BBC reported.

The FSB, as the security service is also known, said Whelan faces up to 20 years in prison if convicted, TASS news agency reported.

The U.S. State Department did not immediately respond to Fox News for comment.

The FSB, which conducts domestic intelligence and counterintelligence, was spun-off from the infamous KGB after the collapse of the Soviet Union. A former KGB agent,

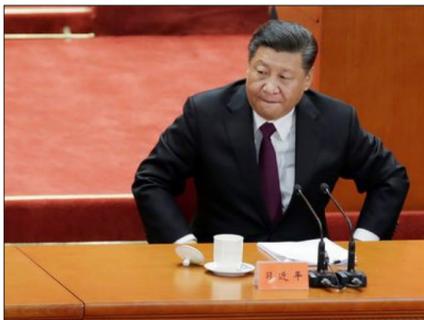


Vladimir Putin ran the FSB before ascending to the presidency.

Of all the agencies, the FSB looms largest in Russians' minds because it hunts domestic threats. In October, a man entered a local branch of the FSB intelligence agency in Akhangel'sk

and detonated an improvised explosive device, killing the man and injuring three FSB officers. (Fox News)

### China to Kick Off Year of Sensitive Anniversaries with Major Speech on Taiwan



BEIJING - China will kick off a year of sensitive anniversaries with a major speech on Wednesday by Presi-

dent Xi Jinping on Taiwan, China's most sensitive issue.

In 2019 China will celebrate 70 years since

Communist China's founding. Anniversaries are always touchy events in China, where maintaining stability is the ruling Communist Party's overwhelming priority.

Next year brings at least six that could unsettle the party, from June's 30 years since the bloody Tiananmen crackdown to October's 70 years since Mao Zedong proclaimed the founding of the People's Republic at the end of an even bloodier civil war. But it will be self-ruled

Taiwan, proudly democratic and claimed by China as its own, that will be the focus of Xi's first important, pre-announced public event of the year.

State news agency Xinhua said on Monday that Xi will give a major speech in Beijing's Great Hall of the People on the 40th anniversary of a key policy statement that led to a thaw in relations with Taiwan, the "Message to Compatriots in Taiwan".

Xinhua gave no other details. (Reuters)

### Iraqi Warplanes Strike Islamic State Leaders in Syria: Military

BAGHDAD - Iraqi warplanes hit a meeting of Islamic State leaders near Deir al-Zor in Syria on Monday, destroying the building they were gathered in, the military said in a statement, without giving further details about the militants targeted.

The statement said F-16 fighter jets carried out the raid around al-Sousa village in eastern Syria, as "30 leaders from Daesh (Islamic State) gangs" met in the building. The strike came a day after Iraq's government hint-

ed at greater involvement for its armed forces in Syria as the U.S. begins withdrawing troops from the country.

Iraq fears that Islamic State militants in Syria will try to cross the border, and analysts warn of increasing insurgent-style attacks in both countries. Baghdad has carried out several air raids in Syrian territory with the agreement of President Bashar al-Assad. Its army and Shi'ite paramilitaries have re-inforced at the border in recent months. (Reuters)

### NASA Spaceship Zooms Toward Farthest World Ever Photographed

TAMPA - A NASA spaceship is zooming toward the farthest, and quite possibly the oldest, cosmic body ever photographed by humankind, a tiny, distant world called Ultima Thule some four billion miles (6.4 billion kilometers) away. The US space agency will ring in the New Year with a live online broadcast to mark historic flyby of the mysterious object in a dark and frigid region of space known as the Kuiper Belt at 12:33 am January 1 (0533 GMT Tuesday). Real-time video of the actual flyby is impossible, since it takes more six hours for a signal sent from Earth to reach the spaceship, named New Horizons, and another six hours for the response to arrive. (AFP)

### CCTV Footage Shows Men Transporting 'Khashoggi Body Parts'

ANKARA - A Turkish television station has broadcast CCTV footage showing men carrying cases and bags which it says contained slain Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi's body parts.

The images shown on A-Haber television late Sunday feature three men carrying five suitcases and two large black bags into the home of the Saudi consul general in Istanbul.

The residence lies a short distance from the Saudi consulate where Khashoggi was murdered in October in a killing that has tested Riyadh's relations with the West. Citing unnamed Turkish sources, A-Haber said Khashoggi's dismembered body was inside the cases and bags. (AFP)

### Merkel Vows Germany Will Keep Pushing for 'Global Solutions'

BERLIN - Chancellor Angela Merkel says Germany will keep pushing for global solutions to challenges in 2019 and also has to take greater responsibility in the world. Closing a politically turbulent 2018 in Germany, Merkel devotes a significant part of her annual New Year's address to the merits of bringing a multilateral approach to international problems - a style she has consistently defended in the face of U.S. President Donald Trump's "America First" tactics.

The fourth-term chancellor pointed to curbing climate change, managing migration and combating



terrorism as the kinds of challenges that benefit from a wide view. Germany starts a two-year stint on the U.N. Security Council on Jan. 1.

"We want to resolve all these questions in our own interest, and we can do that best if we consider the interests of others," Merkel said in a text of

the message her office released ahead of a scheduled Monday broadcast. "That is the lesson from the two world wars of the last century," she added. "But this conviction is no longer shared today by everyone, and certainties of international cooperation are coming under pressure." (Fox News)

### Bahrain Top Court Upholds Sentence against Activist Rajab: Lawyer

DUBAI - Bahrain's high court upheld on Monday a five-year jail sentence against human rights activist Nabeel Rajab, his lawyer said, in a move described by campaign groups as "political persecution" and "utterly outrageous".

An outspoken critic of the Bahraini government who played a prominent role in pro-democracy protests in 2011, Rajab was convicted in February over social media posts in which he accused the prison authorities of torture and

criticized Saudi Arabia's air strikes in Yemen.

Rajab, in his mid-50s, is already serving a two-year term for torture allegations he made in a news interview and faces a number of other cases, including over a column he wrote in the New York Times in 2016. "The Court of Cassation rejected the appeal and upheld the sentence of five years in prison against Nabeel Rajab for his tweets," his lawyer, Mohamed Al Jishi, told Reuters by telephone. (Reuters)

### May would be 'Good Time' for Trump Visit to UK after Brexit

LONDON - U.S. President Donald Trump might visit Britain in May 2019 after the country's departure in March from the European Union, the U.S. ambassador to Britain, Woody Johnson, said on Monday.

Asked whether a state visit promised by Prime Minister Theresa May last year could be rescheduled to coincide with a commemoration of the end of World War Two in May, Johnson told BBC radio: "Between you and me, I think that would be a good time."

Trump visited Britain in July and although it was not a formal state visit after wide public protests, he met Queen Elizabeth. Brexit marks a watershed in Britain's diplomatic relations with the world as it tries to reshape ties to Europe and bolster its long-standing "special relationship" with the United States under Trump's unpredictable presidency.

Asked if Trump would like to come again for a state visit, Johnson said: "I would think the President would be in favor of it and looking forward to it because that was mentioned when he was over here, so if we can do that it would be, I think, a big positive." He said a deadlock in Britain's parliament, which means that it is unclear what shape Brexit will take, meant a solution was necessary. "The country is in need of leadership."

Johnson reiterated Trump's view that the United States was looking forward to a "quick, very massive bilateral trade deal" after Brexit, but that did not "look possible" under the current terms on which Prime Minister Theresa May has agreed a draft deal to leave the EU. (Reuters)

## Neighbor News

### Pakistan-India Friendship

ISLAMABAD - Recently, a positive development has taken place at the diplomatic level between Pakistan and India due to the establishment of the Kartarpur Corridor. The question then arises: why has this very positive development only taken place just now? If we look back at history, Benazir Bhutto made a lot of progress at the diplomatic level with Rajiv Gandhi. But sadly, during that period, the government of the PPP was forced to face many problems due to this. Ms Bhutto was even accused of being a security risk. Imran Khan, however, has full support from the establishment. This is the reason that the current government

has been successful in undertaking such major steps. But it is not just that. What are the other hidden reasons behind these kinds of actions? Let us analyse them.

There is a need to understand that just when right-wing parties come into power, the chances of improving relations with respect to such diplomatic matters increase. The reason for this is that their strategy attracts relatively less criticism because, at the end of the day, they are critics themselves. For instance, in comparison with the PPP, the PML-N was considered more conservative while the PPP was considered a progressive party. (Pakistan Today)

### Iran's Revolutionary Guards Plan to Upgrade Speed Boats with Stealth Technology

LONDON - Iran's Revolutionary Guards said on Monday they plan to upgrade their speed boats in the Gulf with radar-evading stealth technology and new missile launchers as tensions rise between Tehran and Washington in the vital oil shipping route.

Ending a long absence of U.S. aircraft carriers in the region, the USS John C. Stennis entered the Gulf last week, and was shadowed by the Revolutionary Guards' speed boats.

There have been periodic confrontations between the Revolutionary Guards vessels and U.S. military in the Gulf, although the number of incidents has dropped in recent months.

"We are trying to increase the agility of the

Guards' speed boats and equip them with stealth technology to facilitate their operations," Alireza Tangsiri, the Revolutionary Guards' navy chief, was quoted as saying by the state news agency IRNA.

Tangsiri also said the speed boats will be equipped with new missiles, and their speed will reach 80 knots per hour. He did not elaborate on whether Iran had already mastered these technologies or if they were still in the study phase.

Iran says it has been developing its own stealth technology for fighter jets and vessels, but the prototypes it has unveiled in recent years have mostly been met with derision by defense experts. (Reuters)

### France Committed to Boost Trade with Pakistan

ISLAMABAD - Ambassador of France in Pakistan, Marc Barety has said his country is keen to develop strong business contacts with Pakistan, and also focusing on the promotion of the small and medium enterprises in Pakistan.

He expressed these views while giving a message on the occasion of the start of 2019 New Year celebrations.

Ambassador said the year 2018 marked the enhanced cooperation between France and Pakistan and bilateral resolve to explore new opportunities to further our relationship.

As we round up year 2018 we remember the visit of Secretary General of French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, Maurice Gourdault-Montagne, to Pakistan in July in connection with 13th round of Bilateral Political Consultations.

A delegation of six major companies of France visited Karachi in September to explore the investment opportunities in Pakistan. French and German embassies in Islamabad jointly organized the musical tour of "Stradivaira" in different cities of Pakistan. (Agencies)

### Iran: University Students Protest, Demand Resignation of Spiritual Leader's Adviser

TEHRAN - Hundreds of Iranian students demonstrated on Sunday for the second day in a row to demand the resignation of officials of the board of Azad University, including the senior adviser of Iranian Supreme Leader, Ali Akbar Velayati, in the wake of a bus accident that killed 10 people, IRNA agency reported.

The bus was carrying 30 students along a mountainous road within the university's science and research campus in northwestern Tehran when it veered off the road and hit a concrete column. Seven were killed instantly, state TV said, while an updated death toll of 10 was reported by the conservative Tasnim news agency the day after the crash.

The university said Tuesday's incident was caused the driver having a stroke, which was later denied by the forensic doctor. (Agencies)