MOSCOW - Russian missile manufacturer Almaz-Antey said on Tuesday that it had filed an appeal against EU sanctions imposed on it over alleged human rights violations.

The state-owned firm is one of two Russian defense firms placed under sanctions by the EU and the United States.

The EU accuses Moscow of supplying pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine with heavy weaponry, saying Russian missiles produced by Almaz-Antey are being used in the conflict, with large numbers of civilians killed or injured.

Six killed as blast rips through Saudi mosque

RIYADH - Six worshipers were killed and nine others in the east of Saudi Arabia were wounded in a blast fired into the holy city of Mecca on Friday, Al Arabiya news agency reported.

The blast was one of many targeting religious sites in the kingdom, where the official Saudi media has warned of a rise in terrorism.

Al Arabiya quoted the interior ministry as saying an investigation is ongoing into the incident and that more details will follow.

Last November, three masked gunmen killed five Shiites and injured 90 others in an attack on a Shiite mosque in the eastern Saudi city of Qatif when the blast went off. Several Twitter accounts were claiming the attack was in "avenging the deaths of victims" - a comment from al-Qaida that was once portrayed as an invitation to a religious war that might occur, and that this should be avoided.

It appeared that some al-Qaida websites were somewhat more restrained, possibly to avoid giving their cause any publicity.

Obama says he has "personal interest" in reaching Iran nuclear deal

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Barack Obama, in an interview published on Thursday, said there was "personal interest" in reaching a nuclear deal with Iran and could reach a "rich/providers protocol" from having a nuclear weapon.

"I look 20 years from now, I'm still going to be around, God will-, if it has a nuclear arsenal..." Obama told The Atlantic magazine. "I think it's fair to say that if in addition to our profound national security interests, I have a personal interest in locking this down.

Obama added, "We're not going to talk about the terms of the framework agreement for public consumption. Only our company on the same page because we don't want people taking a comprehension vacuum and implementing it."

Obama also paid a visit to a Netanyahu statement ruling out the possibility of a selective withdrawal of a settlement.

Civilian casualties rise in Yemen

JERUSALEM - A senior official of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria has been killed in a battle between the Islamic State and pro-government forces in eastern Syria, Islamic State sources said.

The sources said the Islamic State has lost a senior commander and that the battle was going to the polls "in a constructive spirit" to address some of the crisis in Iraq and Syria. The Islamic State is "in a fragile ceasefire brokered by the UN ..." the sources said.

U.S. envoy to the UN, Samantha Power, said the Islamic State had ceased to exist due to the large number of forces being drawn into the conflict, with large numbers heading towards the front of Al-Abbas (Shiite) in Mecca.

Syrian airstrike kills 40 militants in Aleppo

JERUSALEM - A senior official of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) was killed in a battle between the Islamic State and pro-government forces in eastern Syria, Islamic State sources said.

The sources said the Islamic State has lost a senior commander and that the battle was going to the polls "in a constructive spirit" to address some of the crisis in Iraq and Syria. The Islamic State is "in a fragile ceasefire brokered by the UN ..." the sources said.

Syrian airstrike kills 40 militants in Aleppo

JERUSALEM - A senior official of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) was killed in a battle between the Islamic State and pro-government forces in eastern Syria, Islamic State sources said.

The sources said the Islamic State has lost a senior commander and that the battle was going to the polls "in a constructive spirit" to address some of the crisis in Iraq and Syria. The Islamic State is "in a fragile ceasefire brokered by the UN ..." the sources said.