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## FIFA confirms suspension of Kuwait football federation

MANAMA, May 11, (AFP): FIFA on Thursday confirmed the suspension of both the Guatemala and Kuwait football federations at its annual Congress in Bahrain.

Delegates voted overwhelmingly to retain the suspensions against both federations, which were imposed in Kuwait's case in 2015 and Guatemala in 2016.

The 211 delegate nations able to vote backed by a 99 percent majority to continue to exclude the central American nation and 96 percent for the tiny Gulf state.

Guatemala was suspended from international competition after it rejected a FIFA proposal to extend a "normalisation committee" imposed because of its involvement in the corruption scandal that has rocked world football's governing body.

Kuwait was suspended because of government interference.

In other news, FIFA will rule on the issue of Israeli clubs playing in the West Bank in October, president Gianni Infantino said Thursday, once again delaying a decision on the contentious issue.

FIFA's annual Congress voted to back -- by a majority of 73 to 27 percent - a proposal that pushed football's governing body to report by March 2018, but Infantino said feedback would come before then.

"We will take responsibility and we will take a decision on this matter," he said.

He said a decision would be made at the next FIFA Council meeting, which takes place in India on October 27.

The Palestine Football Association (PFA) argues that the presence of six Israeli clubs on its territory is in breach of FIFA statutes, which forbids another member association playing on another territory without permission.

Israel argues that FIFA rules are unenforceable as there is no permanent border.

The Congress heard from both the Palestinian and Israeli federations before taking the vote.

Palestinian football chief Jibril Rajoub told delegates his association wanted the same rights as others.

"We are not looking for suspension or expulsion but the full recognition of our right that no Israeli clubs play in our territory," he said.

"None of you will accept that any clubs play in your territory." The issue has now been presented to five separate Congresses.

However, Ofer Eini of the Israeli association, said the PFA was looking for a political solution.

"The sole purpose is to establish the political boundaries," he told the Congress.

"This is outside the authority of FIFA to establish borders.

"What are you trying to stop five or six teams of children from playing football? Will that resolve the Palestinian problem?"

A FIFA commission chaired by South Africa's Tokyo Sexwale has presented several potential solutions and a fresh report was handed to the FIFA Council on Wednesday, said Infantino, without giving further details.

Following the decision, campaign group Avaaz said the FIFA president had been "bullied" by Israel.

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- ▲ **US\$/KD 0.30465/75**
- ▲ **Euro/KD 0.3313**
- **Yen/KD 0.0026**
- ▼ **British £/KD 0.3929**
- ▲ **KSE +14.5 pts** at closing May 11  
See Page 35
- ▼ **DOW -32.10 pts** at 21:55 May 11  
See Page 36
- ▼ **Nasdaq -16.90 pts** at 21:55 May 11
- ▲ **FTSE +1.39 pts** at closing May 11
- ▲ **Nikkei +61.46 pts** at closing May 11
- ▲ **Gold \$1,223.15** per oz (London)
- ▲ **NYMEX crude \$47.81 pb**
- ▲ **Brent crude \$50.75 pb**
- ▲ **3-month \$ LIBOR rate 1.18094%**

# Grilling win for Constitution, PM

### Former Aden governor defies government

## Council seeks secession of southern Yemen

ADEN, May 11, (Agencies): Senior tribal, military and political leaders have formed a new council seeking the secession of southern Yemen, the former governor of the area's main city Aden said on Thursday, threatening to bring more turmoil to a two-year-old civil war.

Aidaros al-Zubaidi made his announcement in a televised address in front of the flag of the former nation of South Yemen, whose forces were defeated by the north in 1994 and brought into a reunified country.

Zubaidi said a "national political leadership" under his presidency would administer and represent the south — a region which holds much of Yemen's modest oil deposits, the backbone of its economy.

The announcement raises the prospect of more

division in an already complex conflict in the impoverished Arabian Peninsula country, where Saudi Arabia is leading a coalition of Gulf Arab forces against Houthi fighters allied to Iran.

Thousands of Saudi-led air strikes have backed both southern fighters and the forces of Yemen's internationally-recognised government against the Houthis.

But the southerners and the government of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi have been caught up in their own power struggle — undermining Saudi efforts to coordinate the campaign.

The Houthis say the Gulf powers are seeking to divide and occupy the country.

Neither the government, which is nominally based in Aden but works mostly from Riyadh, nor the Saudi-led coalition could be immediately

reached for comment.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, a senior southern Yemeni official said secessionists hoped the mostly Gulf Arab military coalition would support their cause.

"It is a step forward after a long struggle. The people of South Arabia have finally managed to organise themselves towards independence," the official said.

"The UAE and the Gulf respect the right of self determination, and we don't think they will be against the Southern will ... We don't advise the Hadi government to use force," the official added.

Many southerners feel that officials in the north have exploited their resources and cut them

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Photo by Rizk Taufiq  
HH the Prime Minister full of smiles after the marathon grilling.

### Praise for Premier

By Abubakar A. Ibrahim  
Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, May 11: Parliament Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim thanked the MPs who presented interpellation motions against HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and State Minister for Housing Affairs and Services Yasser Abul, following deliberations on the three grilling requests from 9:00 am Wednesday until 4:00 am Thursday.**

He affirmed the Parliament agreed to discuss the two interpellation requests against the prime minister behind closed doors in response to the request of the government, indicating the discussion ended without any vote of no-confidence due to failure to meet the required number of signatures.

In a related development, HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Thursday sent a cable to the premier, congratulating him on successfully completing the interpellation motion.

HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also congratulated the prime minister on the MPs' renewal of confidence in him in line with the Constitution.

In a cable to the prime minister, Sheikh Nawaf said, "I am pleased to address to Your Highness the warmest felicitation for the precious confidence affirmed by the respectable National Assembly as stipulated in the Constitution." He expressed well-wishes to the premier in the process of reforms and full-scale development. He hopes the premier will succeed in attaining prosperity for the country and its people as desired by HH the Amir — the leader of humanitarian activities.

Meanwhile, MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei, one of the proponents of a grilling motion against the premier, claimed there was a conspiracy to discuss the interpellations secretly; thereby, preventing the people from following up what he considers the strongest grilling in the history of the country. He said this happened to avoid putting pressure on the MPs to sign a non-cooperation motion.

After discussing the grilling motions against the premier, the Parliament tackled the interpellation against State Minister for Housing Affairs and Services Yasser Abul with the following points:

- Failure to hold accountable the companies which committed grave errors in constructing government houses in the northwestern part of Sulaibikhat, Jaber Al-Ahmad and Sabah Al-Ahmad, violation of laws on the housing projects in Metlaa and Khairan, and making citizens bear the cost for repairing damages caused by the mistakes of these companies.
  - Violation of law numbers 47/1993 and 50/2010 amending some provisions of law number 44/1993 on housing care and establishment of stock companies to implement Metlaa and Khairan residential city projects.
  - The Public Authority for Housing Welfare's decision to make changes in the contract — from North Metlaa to South Metlaa — without taking into consideration the technical and geographical differences.
  - Misleading information presented to lawmakers during discussion of the housing issue on April 26, 2017 as the minister's responses contradicted contents of the questions forwarded to him.
  - MPs Ali Al-Daqbasi and Abdullah Al-Fahad spoke in support of the grilling motion while MPs Rakan Al-Nisf and Auda Al-Ruwaiee spoke against.
- The discussion ended without a no-confidence motion against the minister

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A member of the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) holds a Kalashnikov assault rifle as he stands in the town of al-Karamah, 26 kms from the Islamic State (IS) group bastion of Raqqa on May 10. (AFP)

### Pentagon chief, Turkish PM meet

## IS town fall, 'victory' for Kurds

## Iraqis surround Mosul Old City

BEIRUT, May 11, (Agencies): The capture of a key Syrian town and a nearby dam from Islamic State group militants by Syrian Kurdish-led forces undermines the IS's ability to defend its de facto capital, Raqqa and disrupts its ability to plan attacks in Western countries, the US-led international coalition said Thursday.

Tabqa and the nearby dam, Syria's largest, were seized a day earlier in an offensive that lasted nearly seven weeks, with the backing of airstrikes from the international coalition. The Kurdish-led forces were clearing the town and the dam Thursday of land mines, the militants' favorite weapon.

The fall of Tabqa also denies militants "a key coordination hub" that had been used by the group's foreign fighters since 2013 to plan attacks against the West, the coalition said in a statement. Tabqa had served as a base for the planning such operations after the militants lost other territories in northern Syria.

The capture of Tabqa sets the stage for an advance on Raqqa, some 25 miles (40 kms) to the east.

Coalition spokesman Col John Dorrian said the capture of Tabqa is "yet another victory" for the Kurdish-led forces, the US's most effective partner on the ground in Syria fighting IS. He earlier said that after Tabqa is secured, the Syrian Kurdish-led forces will continue operations to "isolate and seize Raqqa."

The capture of Tabqa came a

BAGHDAD, May 11, (Agencies): US-backed Iraqi forces were moving to surround Mosul's Old City on Thursday, a week after launching a fresh push to drive Islamic State militants from areas they still hold, according to an Iraqi officer overseeing the operation.

Iraqi special forces Lt Gen Sami al-Arathi said battle plans had changed and a northern advance was launched last week after Iraqi forces struggled to push into the Old City from the south.

As Iraqi army and federal police forces push from the north, the country's special forces are moving toward the Old City through Mosul's western industrial neighborhoods.

"The multi-axis advance ... has presented the enemy with more dilemmas than they can react to," US-led coalition spokesman John Dorrian told reporters during a press conference Wednesday. Dorrian said over the past week Iraqi forces retook more than 30 square kms (12 square miles) of terrain from IS.

Hundreds of civilians could be seen fleeing the fighting Thursday.

A Mosul woman was given a cigarette by an Iraqi soldier,



A man pushes two children in a wheelchair as they flee heavy fighting between Islamic State militants and Iraqi special forces in Mosul, Iraq on May 10. (AP)

another was handed a cane. A handful of wounded civilians were evacuated from the front line, and a woman who appeared to have lost both her legs was rushed away on the hood of an armored vehicle.

The operation to retake Mosul began in October, and the eastern half of the city was retaken earlier this year. The battle for the more densely populated western half, including the Old City, has been slower. Mosul fell to IS nearly three years ago when the militant group blitzed into Iraq from neighboring Syria and took nearly a third of the country under its control. Today a fraction of western Mosul is the last significant urban terrain IS holds in Iraq.

The UN estimates some 350,000 people remain trapped in IS-held parts of western Mosul. Clashes over the past week have forced more than 11,000 civilians to flee.

Dorrian said while IS defenses in Mosul are "degraded" each day, it is still impossible to predict how much longer the operation will take.

Jihadists preparing for a desperate last stand in Mosul are booby-trapping homes with civilians inside and welding

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### NewsWatch

**EL-ARISH, Egypt:** Islamic extremists in Egypt's restive northern part of the Sinai Peninsula ambushed local tribesmen who were securing an area in the region on Wednesday, killing 10, security officials said.

The men were from the Tarabin tribe and were manning a checkpoint near a militant-stronghold south of the border town of Rafah when the militants approached them in a vehicle and opened fire, said the officials, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to reporters.

Local residents who witnessed the attack told The Associated Press that the militants were using a security vehicle they had apparently captured in fighting from security forces. The eyewitnesses also spoke on condition of anonymity, fearing retribution.

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