



JANUARY 24, 2012

ARAB WORLD

Kingdom announces withdrawal of its monitors from Syria

Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal announced the end of the Kingdom's participation in the Arab League monitoring mission in Syria on Jan. 22, citing the lack of cooperation and good faith efforts on the part of the Syrian government. Addressing a meeting of the Arab League's Foreign Ministers Council in Cairo, Prince Saud stated that "Based on the Syrian government's official endorsement of the Arab League's proposed solution, we agreed to take part in the Arab monitors team, whose mission is not to work as negotiators or mediators but to monitor the Syrian government's commitment of strictly and clearly carrying out the plan Regrettably, Syrian authorities did not live up to any of the articles of the Arab plan At this point, we ask whether it is genuine Arab behavior that a ruler kills his people or that an Arab army's mission is to devastate its own people instead of protecting them."

Prince Saud stated that Saudi Arabia refused to "become false witnesses or to be exploited by whoever to justify the crimes committed against the Syrian people or to cover those crimes." Therefore, he declared, "I announce the withdraw of the Kingdom's Arab League monitors from Syria in protest against the Syrian government's failure to comply with any of the elements of the Arab plan, which aims to save dear Syrian blood."

The Saudi Foreign Minister advocated continued, concerted action from the Arab world and the international community, to pressure the Syrian government to end the violence against its citizens. Following the lead of Saudi Arabia, the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) issued a statement on Jan. 24 announcing the withdrawal of its monitors from the Arab League monitoring mission in Syria.

SAUDI ARABIA-U.S. RELATIONS

Justice Minister meets with U.S. Attorney General, Chief Justice

Minister of Justice Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulkareem Al-Issa met in Washington on Jan. 17 with U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts. During the meeting, Dr. Al-Issa briefed Chief Justice Roberts on efforts to develop the judiciary in the Kingdom within the framework of the Judiciary Development Project of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz. He noted that

the Saudi judiciary provides strong guarantees that enhance the confidence bestowed upon it as a protector of rights and freedoms.

On Jan. 20, Dr. Al-Issa was received by U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and senior officials of the U.S. Justice Department. During the meeting, he outlined the steps that his government has taken to combat terrorists targeting the Kingdom. Terror-related crime in the Kingdom is on the decline as a result of Saudi Arabia's decisive crackdown on criminals, its effective justice system and its successful extremist rehabilitation program, he said. Dr. Al-Issa insisted that the Saudi judiciary protects legal rights and freedoms, but stressed the difference between freedom and chaos, liberty and law-breaking. Quoting political theorists, he said freedom and responsibility are twins that, when separated, both face death. Regarding terrorist financing, the Minister of Justice noted that the Saudi government has recently taken strong measures to end the funding, citing new legislation, effective executive tools and consistent prosecutions.

Royal Saudi Air Force takes part in U.S. Red Flag Exercises

A series of joint exercises, dubbed Red Flag 5, began on Jan. 24 at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada with the participation of the U.S. Air Force, the Saudi Royal Air Force, and the Republic of Korea Air Force. The Saudi contingent includes pilots, technicians and aides operating several fighter jets. The exercises are scheduled to last for 10 days.

EMBASSY ACTIVITIES

Ambassador Al-Jubeir hosts Saudi academics

Saudi Ambassador to the United States Adel A. Al-Jubeir hosted a luncheon on Jan. 24 in honor of Saudi university professors participating in the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program.

