

N. Korea warns of stronger response to any military measures by US



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken
ANDREA VERDELLI/
BLOOMBERG

North Korea criticised US Secretary of State Antony Blinken for trying to get China to pressure Pyongyang to lay down arms, and warned that its response will grow "more overwhelmingly and aggressively" to any stronger military measures by the United States on the Korean Peninsula, state media KCNA said on Saturday. Blinken's "threats" for China to pressure Pyongyang expresses a "dangerous hegemonic mentality", KCNA said, citing

a North Korean Foreign Ministry official, Reuters reported.

KCNA also criticised the U.S. for sending military assets including a nuclear-powered submarine to the Korean Peninsula, risking "peace and security".

North Korea fired two short-range missiles off its east coast last week, less than an hour after Pyongyang warned of a response to military drills by South Korean and U.S. troops.

The country is under international sanctions over its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes.

According to South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Blinken has called key ally South Korea to discuss results of his visit to China this month.

Blinken told South Korean Foreign Minister Park Jin he had an honest, practical and constructive dialogue with the Chinese side, and wanted to explain the results of his visit in as much detail as possible, a ministry statement said.

Blinken and Park decided to continue to communicate regarding relations with China and to urge Beijing to play a constructive role in North Korea's suspension of provocations and denuclearisation, the ministry said. During the visit to China where Blinken met President Xi Jinping and other top officials, the two sides agreed to stabilise their intense rivalry so it does not veer into conflict, but failed to produce any major breakthrough.

Israeli forces kill Palestinian at West Bank checkpoint near Al-Quds

Israeli forces shot and killed a Palestinian man claiming that he had opened fire at the main checkpoint between occupied northern West Bank and Al-Quds amid a new round of atrocities waged by the regime against local residents.

The Israeli regime's Hebrew-language media outlets claimed that the yet unidentified Palestinian arrived on foot at the Qalandiya checkpoint north of al-Quds early Saturday morning while carrying an M16 automatic rifle and began firing at Israeli forces in the area before being shot dead at the scene, Press TV reported. A "security guard" and another man were reportedly slightly injured after being shot at the checkpoint. Israeli police forces were rushed into the scene and the two injured were evacuated by medical personnel to Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital in West Al-Quds for treatment.

Earlier on Friday, an Israeli woman that tried to stab the regime's soldiers was shot and wounded in the northern West Bank in what officials were reportedly investigating as a possible attempted suicide.

The Israeli military claimed in a statement that the nearly 40-year-old woman approached the soldiers near the Tapuah Junction and tried to stab them.

"In response, the soldiers opened fire in her direction to remove the danger," the military said.

The woman was wounded in her lower body and taken to a hospital in "moderate condition," the regime's Army Radio further claimed, noting that no soldiers were injured in the incident.

According to the military report, the woman was "dressed as a Palestinian," but did not elaborate.

The incidents came amid heightened tensions in the West Bank following a series of retaliatory Palestinian operations, and price tag attacks by extremist Zionist settlers.



Israeli forces arrive at the scene where a security guard and another man were slightly injured after being shot at Qalandiya checkpoint north of Al-Quds, the occupied West Bank, on June 24, 2023.
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Eastern Libya administration threatens oil blockade



REUTERS - Authorities based in eastern Libya on Saturday threatened to blockade oil exports over the Tripoli government's use of energy revenue, accusing it of wasting billions of dollars without providing real services.

Libya has been locked in a political standoff since last year, when the parliament in eastern Libya rejected the interim Government of National Unity in Tripoli and designated a new administration that has been unable to take over in the capital.

House Republicans seek to expunge Trump impeachments



REUTERS - Two of Donald Trump's staunchest allies in the U.S. Congress have introduced legislation aimed at expunging the former president's two impeachments, a legislative maneuver without precedent in U.S. history.

Representative Elise Stefanik, the No. 4 House of Representatives Republican, and hardline Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene introduced a pair of resolutions that if enacted would aim to change the record "as if such articles had never been passed".

UN urges action to stop 'wanton killings' in Sudan's Darfur

The United Nations called Saturday for immediate action to stop "wanton killings" of people fleeing El Geneina, the capital of West Darfur state, by Arab militias aided by paramilitary forces.

For more than two months, the Sudanese army headed by Abdel Fattah al-Burhan has been locked in fighting with the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) commanded by his former deputy Mohamed Ham-

dan Daglo, AFP reported. The deadliest violence has raged in Darfur, a vast western region on the border with Chad where the UN has warned the conflict has taken an "ethnic dimension".

"We are gravely concerned that such wanton killings are ongoing and urge immediate action to halt them," UN rights office spokeswoman Ravina Shamdasani said in a statement.

"People fleeing El Geneina

must be guaranteed safe passage and humanitarian agencies allowed to access to the area to collect the remains of those killed," she added.

The Geneva-based UN rights office said people who escaped to Chad had given "horrifying accounts of armed 'Arab' militia backed by the Rapid Support Forces killing people fleeing El Geneina on foot". It said witnesses had given "corroborating accounts" of Arab militia

targeting men from the non-Arab Masalit people.

The UN rights office said that all but two of the 16 people it interviewed testified that they had witnessed "summary executions" and the targeting of civilians on the road from El Geneina to the border between June 15 and 16. The US said last week that up to 1,100 people had been killed in El Geneina, in a statement that attributed the atrocities "primarily" to the RSF



paramilitary force.

In its statement, the UN rights office said El Geneina had become "uninhabitable", and that essential infrastructure had been destroyed and movement of aid to the city remained blocked.

It called on the RSF leadership to "immediately,

unequivocally condemn and stop the killing of people fleeing El Geneina. "We urge the immediate establishment of a humanitarian corridor between Chad and El Geneina, and safe passage for civilians out of areas affected by the hostilities," it said.

Russian president calls ...

'A march of justice'

"This is not a military coup, but a march of justice," Prigozhin said.

Prigozhin posted video of himself at the military headquarters in Rostov-on-Don and claimed his forces had taken control of the airfield and other military facilities in the city. Other videos on social media showed military vehicles, including tanks, on the streets.

The rebellion comes at a time when Russia is "fighting the toughest battle for its future," Putin said, as Western governments heap sanctions on Moscow and arm Ukraine.

"The entire military, economic and information machine of the West is waged against us," Putin said.

Russia's security services, including the Federal Security Service, or FSB, called for Prigozhin's arrest after he declared the armed rebellion late Friday.

Prigozhin said he wanted to punish Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu after he accused Russian government forces of attacking Wagner field camps in Ukraine with rockets, helicopter gunships and artillery. He claimed that "a huge number of our comrades got killed."

Prigozhin said Wagner's forces shot down a Russian

military helicopter that fired on a civilian convoy, but there was no independent confirmation of that.

He alleged that Gen. Valery Gerasimov, chief of the General Staff, ordered the attacks following a meeting with Shoigu, where they decided to destroy Wagner.

The Defense Ministry denied attacking the Wagner camps. Prigozhin said he had 25,000 troops under his command and urged the army not to offer resistance.

Ramzan Kadyrov, the strongman leader of the Chechnya region who used to side with Prigo-

zhin in his criticism of the military, expressed his full support of Putin's "every word."

"We have the commander in chief, elected by the people, who knows the situation to the slightest detail better than any strategist and businessman," Kadyrov said. "The mutiny needs to be suppressed." Wagner forces have played a crucial role, capturing the eastern city of Bakhmut, an area where the bloodiest and longest battles have taken place. But Prigozhin has increasingly criticized the military brass, accusing it of incompetence and of starving his troops of munitions.

Security high in Moscow

Military trucks and armored vehicles were seen in central Moscow early Saturday, and soldiers with assault rifles were deployed outside the main Defense Ministry building. The area around the presidential administration near Red Square was blocked, snarling traffic. Col. Gen. Sergei Surovikin, the deputy commander of the Russian forces in Ukraine, urged Wagner troops to stop any move against the army, saying it would play into the hands of Russia's enemies who are "waiting to see the exacerbation of our domestic political situation." Western countries moni-

tored developments closely. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke with his counterparts in the other G7 countries and the European Union's foreign affairs representative, his spokesman said, adding that Blinken "reiterated that support by the United States for Ukraine will not change."

Latvia and Estonia, two NATO countries that border Russia, said they were increasing security at their borders.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani reacted to the developments in Russia, saying that Tehran supports the rule of law in the country. He emphasized that the developments are a domestic matter, according to Iran's

Foreign Ministry's official website.

The Kremlin said Putin spoke by phone with the leaders of Turkey, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan about the events.

A 'gift' to the West

Russia's close ally Belarus said Saturday that the armed insurrection underway by the Wagner mercenary group was a "gift" to Western countries, warning the uprising could spell "disaster", according to AFP. "Any provocation, any internal conflict in military or political circles, in the information field or in civil society is a gift to the collective West," the Belarusian Foreign Ministry said, citing a statement by Minsk's Security Council.