

Russian Experts to Join Malaysian Airliner Crash Probe



Russia says it has set up a group of experts to join an international probe into a Malaysian airliner crash. (file photo)

MOSCOW (FNA)- Russia announced on Sunday it has set up a group of experts to join an international probe into a Malaysian airliner crash in East Ukraine.

"The group of experts will be led by Oleg Storchevoi, deputy head of the Federal Air Transport Agency (Rosaviatsia) since May 2012," the Russian Transport Ministry said, Interfax reported.

"Storchevoi oversees Rosaviatsia's main aviation divisions: the Flight

Operation, Aircraft Flight Worthiness and Flight Safety Departments," the ministry added.

Storchevoi has extensive flight experience and performed especially important flights for the transportation of top Soviet and Russian government officials. He was also a member of a crew that carried flights for late Russian President Boris Yeltsin. He worked for long for the Russian Transaero airline where he took part in developing and introducing the air car-

rier's flight safety system," it noted.

"The group also comprises adviser to Rosaviatsia's flight safety inspectorate Valery Luchinin, head of a department of the Air Transport Flight Safety State Center Anicetas Jazokas as well as deputy head of the equipment inspection and quality control department of the Aeronavigation South branch of the Russian State Air Traffic Management Corporation Andrei Krylov," according to the ministry.

Two Tunisia Soldiers Killed in Militant Attack

TUNIS (Press TV) - At least two Tunisian soldiers have been killed and six others wounded in a gun battle with Takfiri militants near the country's border with Algeria.

Defense Ministry spokesman, Lamjed Hamami, said on Saturday that a group of 40 militants attacked army soldiers near a military checkpoint at Ghar al-Tine in the Mount Chaambi region. The remote area is considered the main stronghold of Takfiris in the country.

On July 16, militants, armed with rocket-propelled grenades and rifles, carried out a similar attack in the region and killed some 17 soldiers.

Last week, government forces launched a crackdown on the positions of the militants to expel them from their hideout in the Chaambi region near the Algeria border.

On July 19, the office of Prime Minister Mehdi Joma'a said in a statement that the government decided to close all sites used by the militants for their gatherings and also the radio stations, websites or television stations that publish their messages.

The recent attack on military checkpoints came during a period of relative calm in Tunisia after a bloody 2013, with the authorities talking of an improved security situation in recent months while warning that the anti-terror struggle will be a long one.

More than 20 security personnel were reportedly killed in 2013 in what the government described as terrorism-related incidents. Two opposition politicians were also assassinated in 2013 in separate attacks that plunged the country into crisis.



MOSCOW (Press TV) - Russia's Ministry of Emergency Situations says the number of Ukrainian refugees that have been accommodated in Russia's Rostov Province has exceeded 40,000.

The ministry's main department for the region reported on Sunday that a total of 40,243 people, including 13,289 children, have been accommodated in the region.

It said as many as 683 people have been housed in the region's municipalities over the past day. Moreover, 90 temporary accommodation facilities have been deployed in the region, where 5,054 people have found shelter.

More than 32,000 people have also been put up at the relatives' and friends' houses, the report added.

According to reports, the Ukrainian refugees' life support activity involves about 3,000 people and nearly 800 machinery units.

Ukraine launched military operations in eastern regions of Donetsk and Lugansk in mid-April to crush the pro-Russia protests there. Violence resurfaced in May after the two flashpoint regions held local referendums, in which their residents voted overwhelmingly in favor of independence from Ukraine.

KIEV (Press TV) - The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is planning to deploy drones to monitor the conflict zone in Ukraine's volatile eastern regions, reports say.

Russia's RIA Novosti news agency said in a report on Saturday that the security watchdog plans to provide surveillance drones for its monitoring mission in Ukraine's east.

Citing German media, the report said the drones would need technical ability to reach the altitude of 4,000 meters (13,100 feet) in order to determine moving objects at a distance of several kilometers.

According to the Russian news agency, Swiss Foreign Minister and OSCE chairman Didier Burkhalter has agreed on the proposal with officials from Russia and Ukraine.

The move comes as the United States has accused Russia of directly shelling eastern Ukraine, where Ukrainian government troops are fighting pro-Russian forces. Russia has denied the accusations, calling them a baseless "smear campaign." Moscow has said that it is the Russian territory that has been shelled by Ukrainian forces.

Russia has reported that dozens of shells fired by Ukrainian forces in Ukraine's volatile eastern regions have fallen on its Rostov region.

MONROVIA (FNA) - A 33-year-old American doctor working for a relief organization in Liberia tested positive for the deadly Ebola virus.

Dr Kent Brantly, who directs one of the country's two treatment centers run by the Samaritan's Purse recognized his own symptoms and confined himself to an isolation ward, RT reported.

It was not immediately clear how the doctor contacted the disease, which has already killed at least 660 people during its latest outbreak across Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone - or about 60 percent of those diagnosed.

UN Worried Over Myanmar's Displaced Muslims



The new UN human rights envoy for Myanmar expressed serious concern about conditions of Muslims displaced by violence led by extremists. (file photo)

NEW YORK (Tasnim) - The new UN human rights envoy for Myanmar expressed serious concern about conditions in camps for more than 100,000 mostly minority Muslims displaced by violence led by Buddhist extremists, and has warned that the country's human rights situation may be deteriorating.

Yanghee Lee spoke on Saturday at the end of a 10-day fact-finding mission to Myanmar, her first in the capacity of UN rapporteur.

She said Myanmar should be applauded for having come a long way since installing an elected government in 2011 after almost five decades of repressive military rule, AP reported.

"Yet, there are worrying signs of possible backtracking, which if unchecked could undermine Myanmar's efforts to become a responsible member of the international community that respects and protects human rights," she said, after talks with political and social leaders and trips to troubled areas of the country.

Lee visited western Rakhine state, where since 2012, violence between Rakhine Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims has left at least 280 people dead and 140,000 homeless, mostly Muslims confined in squalid camps.

"The situation is deplorable,"

she said, reading to reporters from a 10-page statement.

She said she believed camp residents did not have adequate access to basic services and had heard "disturbing reports" of people dying in the camps due to the lack of emergency medical care and failure to adequately treat preventable illnesses and pregnancy-related conditions.

"By virtue of their legal status (or lack of), the Muslim community has faced and continues to face systematic discrimination, which include restrictions in the freedom of movement, restrictions in access to land, food, water, education and health care, and restrictions on marriages and birth registration," Lee said.

She added she was concerned that "the government's plan for long-term peaceful co-existence may likely result in a permanent segregation" of the Buddhist and Muslim communities.

Lee called for a law banning hate speech, saying she was concerned by its spread "and incitement to violence, discrimination and hostility in the media and on the internet, which have fuelled and triggered further violence."

She also called for the withdrawal of a legislative package on the so-called protection of race and religion that would limit the civil rights of the Muslim community.

African Union Says Disarmament Process to Begin in CAR

BANGUI (Press TV) - African Union has confirmed that a disarmament process will soon take effect in the crisis-hit Central African Republic (CAR), Press TV reports.

Ismael Chergui, the African Union's commissioner for peace and security, said the process will be launched by some 6,000 African Union (AU) forces, who are already in the country on a peacekeeping mission.

The development comes after a ceasefire agreement was signed on July 23 between warring sides in the CAR to end months of violence. "This process will be done under the leadership of the UN and AF-

rica Union. I think we have the two representatives there who are working on that issue with the support of MISCA (AU mission in CAR) and other partners," Chergui told Press TV.

He noted that two units of the AU police force will be deployed to the CAR to monitor implementation of the ceasefire.

The African country descended into chaos last December, when Christian armed groups launched coordinated attacks against the Seleka group, which had toppled the government in March 2013. Anti-Balaka Christian militias have also driven many Muslims out of

the capital city of Bangui.

UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos said in March that almost all of more than 100,000 Muslims once residing in Bangui had fled the violence perpetrated by Christian militants.

France and the African Union deployed forces to the CAR in December 2013 after the United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution giving them the permission to do so. However, the deployment of the French and African Union forces has done little to end violence in the country.

157 Asylum Seekers Arrive in Australia Mainland

CANBERRA (Press TV) - A group of 157 asylum seekers held at sea for a month have arrived on the Australian mainland, reports say.

Twelve people, including men and women holding children, were the first group of the asylum seekers who arrived on the Cocos Islands on Sunday morning. They were then guided to buses to be transported to the tiny island's airport, where they were held.

According to reports, some of the asylum seekers will be taken to the Curtin detention center south of Derby, Western Australia, while some others would remain in the quarantine zone.

Australian Immigration Minister Scott Morrison said on Friday that the government decided to bring the asylum seekers held at a custom boat at sea back to the mainland.

The group, which included Sri Lankan Tamils, had departed from India last month.

On July 6, the Australian government said it had returned 41 asylum seekers



Sri Lankan asylum seekers sent back by Australia prepare to enter the magistrate's court in the southern port district of Galle, Sri Lanka, July 8, 2014.

to Sri Lankan authorities in a transfer at sea. The move sparked demonstrations in the country and drew condemnation from human rights groups, who said the Tamils may face intimidation and violence back in Sri Lanka.

Under current Australian policy, most asylum seekers who try to make their way to Australia by boat are sent to detention camps in Papua New Guinea or Nauru. If determined to be refugees, they will be resettled there, not in Australia.