

Iraq Urges Turkey to Withdraw Troops

BAGHDAD (Press TV) – The Iraqi prime minister says there could be no improvement in Baghdad-Ankara relations as long as Turkish military forces are present in the Arab country.

Haider al-Abadi said that the ties with Turkey could “not move forward one step” until the withdrawal of Turkish troops, state television reported.

The presence of some 500 Turkish troops in the Bashiqa military camp on the outskirts of the Iraqi city of Mosul has been a source of tension between the two neighboring countries.

Thought for Today

Those are the fortunate people who adopt the Holy Qur'an and prayers as their guide and protector and like Prophet Jesus Christ (Isa) they forsake the world and its vicious pleasure.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

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Saudi Attacks Claim More Civilian Lives in Yemen

'Syria Crisis Deepened by U.S.-Led Coalition Intervention'



Saudi-allied militants patrol Yemen's western Dhubab District, about 30 kilometers (20 miles) north of the strategic Bab al-Mandab Strait, January 9, 2017.

SANAA (Dispatches) – At least three Yemenis have been killed in separate attacks by the Saudi military targeting western Yemen.

On Wednesday, the Saudi aircraft bombed the port city of al-Hudaydah in west-central Yemen, killing two people, Yemen's al-Masirah television network reported.

Separately, Saudi border guards opened fire at residential structures in a village in the Monabbih district of Sa'ada Province, which is located in Yemen's extreme northwest. The attack left a civilian dead.

Saudi warplanes also dropped cluster bombs on the Wadi al-Jarrah base controlled by Yemeni forces in the kingdom's Jizan region.

Also on Wednesday, counterattacks by Yemeni snipers shot dead two Saudi troops at Jizan's al-Farizah military base.

Yemeni forces also aborted an attempt by Saudi-allied militants to advance in al-Ghayl District of the northwestern Yemen al-Jawf Province.

The operation killed and injured a number of the militants.

UK Complicity

The United Kingdom exported 500 cluster bombs to Saudi Arabia in the 1980s which the country used in its war on Yemen, an official report shows.

“The UK delivered 500 BL755 cluster munitions under a government-to-government agreement signed in 1986. The final delivery was made in 1989,” reads a letter by Defense Secretary Michael Fallon to Conservative MP Philip Hollobone.

In December, Fallon said that a “limited number” of British

cluster munitions were being used by Saudi-led forces in Yemen. In the same month, Saudi Arabia itself admitted to using the British weapons against its southern neighbor.

Even though Riyadh has told the British government that it would no longer use the weapons, it has not yet confirmed that they were destroyed, Foreign Office Minister Tobias Ellwood told the House of Commons on Tuesday.

“The fact so many British-made cluster bombs were sold and are now being used in Yemen is a stain on the UK's reputation worldwide,” said Liberal Democrat shadow Foreign Secretary Tom Brake.

“Michael Fallon has an urgent responsibility to address this shameful legacy, by suspending arms sales to the Saudi regime and putting pressure on it to stop using these horrific weapons.”

“Most people are rightly sickened by the bombing of innocent civilians in Yemen. Our Government must end its complicity in this brutal conflict immediately,” he added.

The Saudi war against Yemen, which started in March 2015, has so far killed over 11,400 people, according to the latest tally by a Yemeni monitoring group.

The invasion is aimed at restoring power to Riyadh-allied former Yemeni president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi.

The Yemeni army, backed by Ansarullah fighters and allied popular forces, has been defending the country against the Saudi aggression.

MOSCOW (Press TV) – Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu has accused the U.S.-led coalition of having made no positive contribution to the counter-terrorism fight in Syria, but has rather worsened the conflict gripping the Arab country.

Speaking at a Defense Ministry meeting in Moscow, Shoigu stressed that Moscow had achieved its main objectives in Syria regarding the anti-terror battle.

He further noted that the U.S.-led alliance's assistance for Russia's Syria campaign “did not rate at a zero, but a negative score, and to my great regret we did not see this support.”

Shoigu's comments came two days after U.S. Defense Secretary Ashton Carter claimed that the Russians had given “virtually zero” support to Washington in its alleged fight against Daesh terrorists in Syria and Iraq.

The coalition's non-cooperation “required the exertion of all our forces, all our capabilities, deploying quite a serious grouping including aircraft carriers and others,” the Russian official added.

Meanwhile, Russian Chief of General Staff Valery Gerasimov said the coalition airstrikes did not have “any significant

results” in Syria and caused a “considerable number of deaths among civilians and government troops.”

Russia's involvement in Syria “changed the course of fighting terrorism in Syria,” Gerasimov added.

On January 3, over 20 civilians lost their lives in a coalition air raid on the town of Sarmada in Syria's Idlib Province in violation of a nationwide ceasefire that took effect on December 30, 2016, he further pointed out.

The official went on to say that the 2016 September airstrikes by the U.S.-led alliance killed 62 Syrian soldiers and injured 100 others near Dayr al-Zawr Airport.

Moscow launched its campaign against Daesh and other terror outfits in Syria at the Syrian government's request in September 2015. Its air raids have helped Syrian forces advance against foreign-backed terrorists wreaking havoc in the Middle Eastern state since 2011.

This is while the U.S.-led coalition has also been conducting airstrikes against what are claimed to be Daesh terrorists inside Syria since September 2014 without any authorization from Damascus or a UN mandate.

Terrorist Car Bomb Attacks Drop Sharply in Iraq's Mosul

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – The number of car bomb attacks by terrorists in the Iraqi city of Mosul has fallen sharply, signifying the weakening of the group, a top Iraqi commander says.

“Car bombs have been a key component” of Daesh terrorists since the operation to liberate Mosul started on October 17, Major General Maan al-Saadi of the elite Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS) said.

“At the beginning, they launched many car bombs, now much fewer. There are one, two or three

a day, never more than 10. In the first phase, they used more than 50 a day,” he added.

In many cases during the ongoing Mosul operation, Daesh terrorists ran their explosives-laden vehicles into Iraqi forces.

Iraqi government forces have managed to regain control over a number of neighborhoods in east Mosul as they try to flush Daesh terrorists out of the area.

The Iraqi Federal Police announced in a statement that security personnel had wrested full control of Palestine neighborhood



Iraqi forces patrol a street in Mosul in the al-Wihdah neighborhood after recapturing the area from Daesh terrorists on January 9, 2017.

in the eastern part of the city, located some 400 kilometers north of the capital Baghdad, killing 35 Daesh terrorists in the process.

On Sunday, Iraqi forces pushing ahead in east Mosul reached the Tigris River in the center of the city for the first time.

Iraqi army soldiers, supported by fighters from the allied Hashd al-Sha'abi and Kurdish Peshmerga forces, launched a joint operation on October 17 to retake Mosul from Daesh terrorists.

According to figures released

by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), a total of 137,880 people, or 22,980 families, have been displaced from Mosul and neighboring areas ever since the start of the operation.

The west bank of Mosul remains under full Daesh control. In the next phase of the operation, Iraqi forces, assisted by their allied forces, plan to move into the streets of west Mosul.

The full liberation of east Mosul would take place in a matter of days, a CTS commander said.

Five UAE Diplomats Slain in Afghanistan Bomb Attack

KABUL (Dispatches) – The United Arab Emirates says five of its diplomats have lost their lives in a massive bomb explosion that ripped through a guesthouse in the troubled southern Afghan city of Kandahar.

According to the UAE's state-run WAM news agency, the victims were reportedly in the violence-wracked country to inaugurate a number of UAE-backed projects there.

An unnamed Afghan source said the explosives had been placed in sofas in the meeting room of the guesthouse, where a group of high-ranking Afghan officials had gathered to welcome the UAE

ambassador.

The ambassador was in Kandahar to lay the foundation stone for an orphanage and to sign an agreement to offer scholarships in the UAE.

UAE Ambassador Juma Mohammed Abdullah Al Kaabi and Kandahar Governor Homayun Azizi were among the wounded.

Kandahar police chief General Abdul Raziq was also present at the meeting, but escaped unharmed.

Yama Quraishi, an Afghan diplomat in the United States, was also among those killed.

The UAE Foreign Ministry issued a statement, stressing that it is following up on the “heinous terrorist attack” and has set up

a special operations room in conjunction with UAE armed forces and the Afghan government.

At least 11 people, including Kandahar's deputy governor Abdul Ali Shamsi, lost their lives and 16 others sustained injuries when a powerful bomb explosion struck the heavily-guarded governor's compound on Tuesday evening.

Emirati Prime Minister, Vice President and Dubai's ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum also condemned the bombing in a post published on his official Twitter account, saying, “There is no human, moral or religious justification for the

bombing and killing of people trying to help” others.

The Taliban claimed attacks earlier on Tuesday in Kabul. However, the militant group issued a statement on Wednesday, blaming an “internal local rivalry” for the Kandahar assault.

The Taliban militants lost their grip over Afghanistan in the 2001 U.S.-led invasion, but security has never taken hold in the country despite the presence of thousands of foreign boots on Afghan soil.

The Daesh terrorist group is competing with the Taliban in acts of terror. Daesh has claimed responsibility for earlier attacks on Shia events and mosques.



This picture taken on January 10, 2017 shows Afghan policemen standing guard at the site of an explosion near the governor's compound in Kandahar, Afghanistan.