

# Turkey Jails Journalists as Erdogan Rebukes Western Critics



**Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (L) shakes hands with security forces during his visit to the Police Special Operation Department's headquarters in Ankara on July 29, 2016.**

ANKARA (AFP) - Turkey was on Saturday holding 17 journalists on charges of "terror group" membership as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan told Western critics to "mind your own business" over a relentless crackdown following a failed coup.

But in a goodwill gesture two weeks after the July 15 coup bid, Erdogan also announced he was withdrawing thousands of lawsuits against individuals accused of insulting him.

Turkey has detained more than 18,000 people over the attempted putsch which has been blamed on the US-based preacher Fethullah Gulen -- a charge he denies -- with the relentless crackdown sparking warnings from Brussels that Ankara's EU membership bid may be in danger.

Seventeen journalists remained in custody by an Istanbul court over links to Gulen woke up in jails across the city on Saturday as international concern grows over the targeting of reporters in the wake of the putsch.

Twenty-one journalists had appeared before a judge in hearings lasting until midnight on Friday. Four were then

freed but 17 were placed under pre-trial arrest, charged with "membership of a terror group", the state-run Anadolu news agency said.

Those held include the veteran journalist Nazli Ilicak as well as the former correspondent for the pro-Gulen Zaman daily Hanim Busra Erdal.

Among those freed was prominent commentator Bulent Mumay who was given a rapturous welcome by supporters.

Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu defended the detention of reporters, saying it was necessary to distinguish between coup plotters and those "who are engaged in real journalism".

The president also announced that as a gesture of goodwill after the coup he was dropping hundreds of lawsuits against individuals accused of insulting him.

Earlier this year, officials had said more than 2,000 people were being prosecuted on charges of insulting the president.

Thousands of those detained after the coup have now been released, with an

Istanbul court releasing 758 soldiers late on Friday, adding to another 3,500 former suspects already set free.

But with concern growing about the sheer numbers rounded-up, EU enlargement commissioner Johannes Hahn said he needed to see "black-and-white facts about how these people are treated".

In a speech at his presidential palace late Friday remembering those killed during the failed coup, Erdogan angrily denounced the criticism and accused the West of deserting Turkey in its hour of need.

"Some people give us advice. They say they are worried. Mind your own business! Look at your own deeds," Erdogan said.

"Not a single person has come to give condolences either from the European Union... or from the West," said Erdogan.

"Those countries or leaders who are not worried about Turkey's democracy, the lives of our people, its future -- while being so worried about the fate of the putschists -- cannot be our friends," he growled.

## Philippine President Gives Rebels Deadline to Declare Truce

MANILA (AP) — Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte gave communist guerrillas until Saturday to match his truce declaration or he would withdraw it following a rebel attack that killed a government militiaman.

The new president brought fresh hopes of resuming peace talks with the Maoist insurgents, which stalled under his predecessor. The decadeslong insurgency, one of Asia's longest, has left about 150,000 combatants and civilians dead since the late 1960s. It has stunted economic development, especially in the countryside, where the insurgents raid security forces' outposts and mining and agricultural companies.

Duterte said he would scuttle his cease-fire order, which he issued Monday, if the New People's Army guerrillas did not match with their own by 5 p.m. Saturday.

He initially threatened to withdraw the cease-fire by Friday but extended his deadline after the rebels said they were investigating the guerrilla attack.

"Are you ready to declare a ceasefire or not?" Duterte asked during a news briefing, visibly upset after visiting the militiaman's wake in southern Davao del Norte province. The militiaman



**In this file photo, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte delivers his first State of the Nation Address before the joint session of the 17th Congress in suburban Quezon city, northeast of Manila, Philippines.**

was killed in a rebel ambush Wednesday that also wounded four others.

"If I don't get the word from you, then I will lift the order of cease-fire," he said, adding that he was rejecting rebel demands for him to withdraw government troops and police from certain rural areas.

Rebel leaders have asked Duterte to give them more time to study his truce declaration.

Duterte made friendly overtures to the

guerrillas, and then became more critical after the ambush.

"How many Filipinos have died and who killed them? Fellow Filipinos," he said. "The problem with you (is) you carry the element of hate."

It's unclear if the emerging differences between Duterte, who was sworn in on June 30, and the insurgents could affect a resumption of peace talks from Aug. 20 to 27 in the Norwegian capital of Oslo.

## Canadian Citizen Behind Dhaka Deadly Hostage Crisis

DHAKA (Press TV) - Bangladesh police said Saturday a Canadian citizen was one of the masterminds involved in the deadly hostage crisis of early July at a café in the capital Dhaka.

The police said Tamim Chowdhury, a dual Canadian-Bangladeshi national, was one of the masterminds behind the mass killing that claimed the lives of 20 people.

Officers with knowledge of an investigation into the killings and other recent assaults said the man, whose whereabouts are unknown and is believed to be in his early 30s, has led a faction of the Jamayetul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), a militant group which Bangladesh blames for scores of incidents where foreigners and religious minorities were murdered.

Counter-terrorism officials say Chowdhury returned to Bangladesh from Canada three years ago. He has since led and financed efforts to radicalize young people, the officials said.

"So far what we learnt is that Tamim Chowdhury is one of the masterminds of the attacks of Gulshan cafe and Sholakia Eid prayer ground," said an officer, whose name was not mentioned in the report.

Five assailants stormed the upscale cafe in the Gulshan neighbourhood on July 1 and killed 20 hostages. It was the deadliest single militant attack in Bangladesh. A week later, gunmen attacked a gathering of 250,000 people who

had convened for Eid prayers to mark the end of the holy Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. The attackers killed three people there.

Militants involved in the two assaults as well as suspected militants killed during a recent police operation had received training from Chowdhury, the officer added.

On July 26, police launched a mass raid on the hideouts of militants in Kalyanpur district of Dhaka, killing nine and arresting one militant. The one nabbed in the operation, identified as Rakibul Hasan, 25, has reportedly revealed details about Chowdhury. Hasan has told investigators that he and his nine colleagues received from Chowdhury "money, explosives and weapons" and that Chowdhury "trained and advised" them.

He has said during the interrogation that Chowdhury used to visit their flat and "give them necessary funds" and encourage them.

Bangladesh has also blamed the JMB for a string of deadly assaults which have triggered concerns about the rise of Daesh, a Takfiri terrorist group based in Iraq and Syria, in Bangladesh. Officials have rejected claims that Daesh has managed to gain a foothold in the country.

Bangladeshi police patrol the area near the house where police killed nine suspected militants in Dhaka on July 26, 2016, in a gun-battle after storming a hideout where they said a new mass attack was being planned. (AFP)

## Woman in UN Bribery Scandal Gets 20 Months in Prison

NEW YORK (AP) — A tearful U.S. citizen who bribed a top United Nations official to get support for business ventures was sentenced to 20 months in prison Friday by a judge who said bribery schemes do "substantial damage" to the U.N.'s image.

Sheri Yan, 60, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Vernon Broderick in Manhattan after pleading guilty to a bribery charge in January.

The judge said prison was necessary because of the seriousness of the crime.

Yan admitted paying more than \$800,000 in bribes to former U.N. General Assembly President John Ashe, who died several weeks ago in an accident at home. He was awaiting trial after pleading not guilty to a tax charge in the case.

Before the sentence was announced, Yan apologized, saying: "I will be forever punishing myself."

Broderick rejected a request to keep Yan out of prison by defense

attorney Christine Chung, who cited Yan's difficult childhood and "the shame and dishonor and the ripping down of her whole life" that resulted after her arrest last fall. Prosecutors sought a nearly six-year prison term.

Chung described Ashe as a predator, seeking money at every turn.

Chung said Yan, born in the Anhui province in China, was forcibly separated from her brother and their parents for six years in 1966 by the Cultural Revolution when her father, a painter and poet, and mother, an editor and news broadcaster, were forced into labor or "re-education."

She came to the United States in 1987 with \$400 sewn into her clothes and worked as a nanny and home attendant in Washington D.C., where she met her husband, the lawyer said. She became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 2001.

Ng, a billionaire, has pleaded not guilty to charges and is awaiting a January trial.

## News in Brief

HERAT (Press TV) An explosion has rocked Afghanistan's western city of Herat, leaving one civilian dead and five others, including a police force member, wounded.

Herat police said the blast took place close to a compound belonging to the Afghan army on Herat's Minarets Road on Saturday morning. Officials said the explosives were placed in a hand cart.

The Public Health Directorate in Herat said two of those injured in the explosion were in critical condition.

No individual or group has claimed responsibility for the attack, but it bears the hallmark of those carried out by members of the Taliban militant group.

BRUSSELS (AFP) - Belgian police arrested two men suspected of plotting a terror attack in Belgium as Europe remained on edge Saturday following a rising wave of bloodshed on the continent.

Police arrested two men, identified as Nouredine H. and his brother Hamza H., after house searches late Friday in Belgium's French-speaking area of Mons and Liege, federal prosecutors said.

"Both are suspected of planning a terrorist attack somewhere in Belgium," a spokesman said in an English version of the statement. The French version referred to "planning attacks" in the plural.

SYDNEY (AP) — Australia's prime minister has called for an investigation into allegations that teenagers were abused at a juvenile detention center in the country's north.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said Tuesday that he would launch a Royal Commission after graphic footage emerged of teens being tear-gassed and stripped naked at a youth detention center in the Northern Territory.

Royal commissions are Australia's highest form of inquiry.

The footage aired on the Australian Broadcasting Corp.'s investigative program "Four Corners" on Monday.

PESHAWAR (AP) — Flash floods triggered by monsoon rains swept away a bus carrying a wedding party Saturday in northwest Pakistan, killing people 21 people, an official said.

The spokesman for the local disaster management authority, Latifur Rehman, said the incident took place in the Landi Kotal tribal region bordering Afghanistan. At least four people were still missing and it was unclear whether the bride and groom were also traveling in the same bus.

Rehman said eight women were among those killed in the incident.

Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority said in statement Saturday that as many as 55 people have been killed across Pakistan since the monsoon rains started in July.

**Kayhan International Advertising Dept.**  
**33110251-9**  
**Ext. 2336**