

TEHRAN (Dispatches) – Iran on Tuesday welcomed a European Union resolution calling for normalization of relations with the Islamic Republic. The European Parliament, in its plenary session in Strasbourg on Monday, called for increased EU-Iran diplomacy and continued efforts to build dialogue. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said the resolution acknowledges Iran's effective role in promoting peace and stability in the region and also across the world. He urged the European Parliament to take a more positive attitude towards Iran by passing "constructive and realistic resolutions."

LONDON (Dispatches) -- The British government has announced that it has removed Bank Saderat Iran (BSI) from its list of sanctioned entities.

The announcement was made by the UK Treasury which added that the BSI assets had also been unfrozen. The Treasury said in a release that the Iranian bank had been blacklisted as a result of nuclear sanctions against Iran. The decision to delist the bank, it said, was in line with the amended regulations by the European Union regarding the lifting of sanctions against Iran.

Viewpoint

By Kayhan Int'l Staff Writer

Refugee Plight in Calais

'Abji' Awarded at Herat Intl. Women's Film Festival



Iran Advance to 2017 FIFA U-20 World Cup



Iraqi Artillery Fire Now Hitting Daesh Inside Mosul



Militants Massacre Police Cadets in Pakistan

QUETTA, Pakistan (Dispatches) — Militants wearing explosive vests stormed a Pakistani police academy in the southwestern city of Quetta Monday night, killing 61 people, mostly police cadets and recruits, and waging a ferocious gunbattle with troops that lasted into early hours Tuesday.

The four-hour siege — one of the deadliest attacks on Pakistan's security forces in recent years — also wounded 123, mainly police trainees but also some paramilitary troops, according to Wasay Khan, a spokesman for the elite Frontier Corps. Some of the wounded were reported to be in critical condition.

The assault caught many of the recruits asleep in their dorms and forced cadets and trainers to jump off rooftops and run for their lives to escape the attackers.

Pakistani troops responding to the assault said it was over after all three bombers involved in the attack were killed — one was gunned down while two others blew themselves up.

Later Tuesday, conflicting claims of responsibility emerged. The Daesh group, which is waging war in Syria and Iraq where it has declared a self-styled caliphate, posted a claim on the group's media arm, the Arabic-language Aamaq news agency. It said three Daesh militants killed 60 police recruits in Quetta but the claim was not confirmed by Pakistani officials and Daesh did not offer any previously unknown details about the assault.

Earlier, a little-known break-away faction of the Pakistani Taliban, known as the Hakimullah group, also issued a statement claiming responsibility for the attack. Pakistani officials, doubting the group's capabilities in staging such a coordinated and spectacular assault, also could not confirm that claim.

While most of the casualties were cadets and others from the academy, some of the army personnel who responded to the assault were also among those killed, said Shahzada Farhat, police spokesman in Quetta, the capital of Baluchistan province.

The attack began at 11:30 p.m. on Monday, said Baluchistan Home Minister Sarfraz Bugti, with three militants shooting and killing a police guard at the watch tower before storming into the academy, located on the city's outskirts.

Baluchistan officials had earlier received "intelligence reports that some terrorists have entered the province" but had no indications about possible targets.

"We had tightened security, which is why they could not do it in the city and chose a target on the outskirts," said Baluchistan's chief minister, Sanaullah Zehri.

There were initially also conflicting police and military statements about the number of attackers involved. About 700 cadets, trainees, instructors and other staff were inside the academy when it was attacked, Bugti said.

Once inside the academy grounds, Pakistani media said the gunmen headed straight to the dorms housing the cadets and trainees and opened fire, shooting indiscriminately. Some of the cadets jumped off rooftops and through windows to try to escape.

"They were rushing toward our building, firing," one cadet told Pakistani Geo TV news channel. "We rushed for safety toward the roof and jumped down in the back of the building."

Another recruit, his face covered in blood, told the station the gunmen shot at whoever they saw. "I ran away, just praying God might save me," he said.

After the attack, Pakistani forces tightened security around the academy and Quetta hospitals where the wounded were taken. Footage aired on local television stations showed ambulances rushing out of the main entrance of the academy as fire engines struggled to put out fires set off by the explosions from the attackers' suicide vests.

Most of those being treated at the city hospitals had gunshot wounds, although were injured jumping off the rooftop of the hostel housing the cadets to escape the gunmen.

"This war isn't over," said Pakistani Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan. "The enemy is weakened, but not eliminated."

Maj. Gen. Sher Afgan, head of the Pakistani paramilitary force which is primarily responsible for the province, claimed the attackers had received instructions from commanders in neighboring Afghanistan. He said they were most likely from the banned Lashker-e-Jhangvi al-Almi militant group affiliated with Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. The Takfiri militant group has mainly targeted minority Shia Muslims.

The paramilitary chief spoke before Daesh and the Hakimullah group's claims surfaced.

Afghanistan condemned the attack and dismissed Pakistan's allegations that the assault was planned from bases inside Afghanistan. "Afghanistan is the biggest victim of terrorism and denounces all terrorist attacks," said Muhammad Haroon Chakhansuri, spokesman for Afghan President Ashraf Ghani.

In a separate statement, Ghani also condemned the attack, saying that "terrorism is a threat throughout the region, which is reflected in the brutal act today in Quetta."

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Ayatollah Khamenei: West's Anti-Terrorism Coalition Not Genuine



Ayatollah Khamenei meets chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina Bakir Izetbegovic, center, with President Hassan Rouhani also in attendance, left.

TEHRAN (Press TV) — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Tuesday said the military coalition of Western governments allegedly formed to combat terrorism is not real and does not seek to uproot the malicious phenomenon.

"Although such coalitions may even engage in clashes with terrorists in some instances, they are not after genuinely rooting out terrorism in Iraq or in Syria," the Leader said in a meeting with the visiting chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bakir Izetbegovic, here.

Ayatollah Khamenei added that "bad and evil" policies of the Western coalition against terrorism are exacerbating the issues of humanity on a daily basis.

The Leader pointed to the overflow of Takfiri terrorism into Europe and the potential aggravation of the issue in the future.

"The Arab region is apparently the birthplace of this phenomenon but the U.S. administration and some European governments are in reality the main factors behind the occurrence of such events."

Ayatollah Khamenei said the resolution of the current issues hinges

on an understanding of their causes and the existence of the determination to solve them.

"The humiliation of young Muslims in some rich and powerful European countries will create grounds for them to join deviant terrorist groups such as Daesh and these humiliated youths take up murder and explosion upon their return to Europe," the Leader added.

The Leader further expressed the Iranian government's full readiness to improve cooperation with Bosnia and Herzegovina in various political and economic sectors and

boost bilateral coordination in international communities.

Ayatollah Khamenei emphasized that independent countries must reduce rifts and conflicts by strengthening relations and refusing to be swayed by the policies of arrogant powers.

During the meeting, which was also attended by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, the chairman of the Bosnian Presidency said his country's policy is to strengthen relations with Muslim nations.

Izetbegovic stressed the importance of improving collective cooperation to fight terrorism and said all senior Bosnian officials strongly reject and counter the Takfiri ideology.

He expressed regret over the outbreak of conflicts in Muslim countries and said all Muslims are duty-bound to reinforce their unity as discord would lead to their weakening.

The Bosnian official also hoped that relations between Tehran and Sarajevo would result in effective economic cooperation and serve common interests.

Izetbegovic arrived in Tehran on Monday at the invitation of the Iranian president. He held separate talks with Rouhani and Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani and chairman of the Expediency Council Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani on Tuesday.

Also on Tuesday, Iranian and Bosnian officials signed a memorandum of understanding on the promotion of business cooperation and mutual investment in the presence of Rouhani and Izetbegovic.

NATO Flies AWACS Near Syria for First Time

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) — NATO AWACS surveillance planes have flown their first mission in support of the U.S. military in the Middle East, alliance head Jens Stoltenberg said Tuesday.

"NATO itself is now offering direct support with our AWACS surveillance aircraft," Stoltenberg told a press briefing in Brussels, announcing that the first flight took place on Oct. 20.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Turkey will take more effective measures against Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militants in northern Iraq, potentially including ground operations there.

In an interview with the Kanal 24 television channel, Cavusoglu said it was unacceptable for the PKK, which has waged a three-decade insurgency against the Turkish state, to use various towns in Iraq as a base.

A Syrian Kurd leader in France, however, accused Turkey of "massively attacking" Kurdish forces

trying to recapture Raqqa, the Daesh stronghold in Syria.

"With its artillery and aircraft, the Turkish army is taking advantage of the media and international community's focus on Mosul to massively attack Syrian Kurds to stop them taking Raqqa," Khaleen Issa told a news conference in Paris.

Iraq announced the launch of the operation to retake Mosul from Daesh on October 17, and has since been advancing towards the city from the south, east and north.

Issa, the representative of Syrian Kurds in France, said that in their preparations to retake Raqqa, the U.S.-backed Kurdish-Arab Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) "have liberated several villages occupied by Daesh to the northeast of Aleppo."

"If Turkish artillery and aircraft are heavily bombing SDF positions in this zone and in the Afrine district it is partly to stop them (SDF) cutting Daesh supply lines

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Human Rights Watch: Turkey Tortures Detainees

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) — A human rights group said Tuesday that Turkish police have tortured or ill-treated detainees following the failed coup attempt in July, a claim that Turkish officials deny.

In a 43-page report published Tuesday, Human Rights Watch said that a state of emergency adopted after the coup attempt - which is still in effect - has weakened safeguards against torture. It details 13 alleged abuse cases, including sleep deprivation, severe beatings, sexual abuse and rape threats.

"The prohibition of torture in international law is absolute and cannot be suspended even in times of war or national emergency," the report said. "And yet, the emergency decrees remove crucial safeguards that protect detainees from ill-treatment and torture."

It called on the authorities to "immediately rescind those provisions of the emergency decrees that enable abuse."

Turkey launched a massive crackdown on suspected followers of U.S.-based cleric Fethullah Gulen, who has been accused of masterminding the failed July 15 coup. At least 32,000 people have been arrested, among them soldiers, policemen, judges and teachers.

Human Rights Watch said the emergency decree provisions, which include denying lawyers access to medical reports, have made documentation and corroboration of ill-treatment and torture allegations difficult.

Still, the New York-based group said it was able to gather evidence of abuse in ad hoc facilities set up after the coup.

It quoted one police officer telling a detainee: "Because of the state of emergency, nobody will care if I kill you. I will just say I shot you while you tried to run away." It said those words were overheard by the relative of another person in detention.

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