

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) – Turkish police have detained 48 suspected Daesh members who were preparing to launch an attack, an Istanbul police spokesman and state-run Anadolu news agency said on Saturday.

Police raided six addresses in three districts of Istanbul late on Friday, and detained 31 foreign nationals, the police spokesman said in a statement.

One who imagines himself to be all-knowing will surely suffer on account of his ignorance.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

**UNICEF:**

## 1 in 4 Iraqi Kids in Poverty, U.S. Denies Aid



Displaced Iraqi children are seen at the Amriyat al Fallujah camp in Anbar Province, Iraq January 3, 2018.

NEW YORK (Dispatches) – One in four Iraqi children are in poverty and four million are in need of assistance as a result of the country's war with Daesh terrorists, the United Nation's children agency said on Sunday.

The UN has verified 150 attacks on education facilities and 50 attacks on health centers and personnel since 2014, UNICEF said in a statement. Half of Iraq's schools need repairs and over 3 million children have had their

education interrupted, it said.

Iraq declared victory over Daesh in December, having taken back all the territory captured by the terrorists in 2014 and 2015, and is seeking \$100 billion in foreign investment in

transport, energy and agriculture as part of a plan to rebuild parts of the country and revive the economy.

"Children are Iraq's future," said Geert Cappelaere, UNICEF regional director for the Middle East and North Africa.

However, U.S. and Western officials said on Thursday that Washington had no plan to allocate money to the reconstruction process at the conference.

Former head of the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, Jeremy Konyndyk, said by not contributing to reconstruction, especially in combat-ravaged areas, the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump could help set the stage for new militancy.

The UN has verified 150 attacks on education facilities and 50 attacks on health centers and personnel since 2014, the UNICEF statement noted.

The Associated Press also revealed recently that Washington was drawing down its Iraq-based troops now that Daesh has been defeated, relocating them to Afghanistan, where the group is expanding operations.

## Turkish Helicopter Shot Down by Kurdish Militia in Syria's Afrin

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) – A Turkish army helicopter was shot down by Syrian Kurdish YPG fighters near the north Syrian town of Afrin, President Tayyip Erdogan said on Saturday, and the Turkish military said two soldiers on board the aircraft were killed.

YPG sources separately confirmed the downing of the helicopter.

"One of our helicopters was downed just recently," Erdogan told members of his AK Party in Istanbul. "These things will happen, we are in a war ... We might lose a helicopter, but they'll pay the price for this."

A statement from the Turkish military did not specify a reason for why the helicopter crashed. It said two soldiers on board were killed and technical crews were investigating the crash.

The downed helicopter was the first officially confirmed loss of a Turkish aircraft over Syria since the start of the country's long-running war.

In another statement, the Turkish military said a total of nine soldiers were killed and 11 wounded on Saturday in clashes with mainly Kurdish forces near Afrin. It said it had killed 39 militants.

Ankara launched an air and ground

offensive last month against Kurdish fighters in Syria's Afrin region on its border, opening a new front in the multi-sided Syrian war.

Separately, the Turkish military said on Friday the construction of a fifth military post near Syria's northwestern region of Idlib had begun.

Turkey agreed to set up 12 observation posts in Idlib and neighboring provinces under a deal reached with Tehran and Moscow to try to reduce fighting between pro-government forces and mainly terrorist groups in northwest Syria.

However, the "de-escalation" in violence they were meant to monitor has collapsed. The Syrian army, alongside popular forces and heavy Russian air power, launched a major offensive in December to take territory in Idlib province.

Idlib is one of the last main strongholds of terrorists opposed to President Bashar al-Assad, who have been driven from most of their bastions in Syria since Russia joined the war on the side of Assad's government in 2015. Turkey has long been one of the main allies of the anti-Assad terrorists.

**UN Envoy:**

## Oman to Host Next Yemen Talks

MUSCAT (Dispatches) – The United Nations' outgoing envoy for Yemen says his potential successor is to moderate talks between Yemeni sides in Oman.

Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, who will step down by the end of his term later this month, made the remarks on Friday, various Arab-language media outlets reported.

The talks would start out with a round of negotiations between the General People's Congress (GPC) party of former Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh and the country's popular Houthi Ansarullah movement.

The two sides have been attending talks in Switzerland and Kuwait over the past years and have formerly reached agreements on prisoner exchanges.

Saudi Arabia has been waging war on Yemen since March 2015 in an unsuccessful attempt to reinstate Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, another former president, who was friendly to Riyadh. At least 13,600 people have been killed in the war.

In a latest development, Yemeni army soldiers, backed by fighters from allied Popular Committees, have shot dead four Saudi troopers in the kingdom's southwestern border regions of Asir and Jizan, in retaliation for the Riyadh regime's military campaign against the crisis-hit country.

A Yemeni military source, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Arabic-language al-Masirah television network that Yemeni forces shot and killed three soldiers at Sahwa military base of Asir on Saturday afternoon.

Yemeni forces and their allies also targeted another Saudi trooper in al-Khobe district of Jizan,

located 966 kilometers south of the Saudi capital Riyadh.

Separately, Yemeni army soldiers and Popular Committees fighters killed six Saudi-backed militiamen loyal to Yemen's former president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, in the al-Matun district of Yemen's northern province of al-Jawf.

Elsewhere in the Nihm district of the northwestern Yemeni province of Sa'ada, Yemeni army soldiers and their allies launched an attack against Saudi mercenaries, leaving scores of them dead or injured. Two vehicles belonging to the Saudi-sponsored forces were destroyed as well.

In another development, France has shown no concrete signs of reducing or suspending arms sales to the Saudi-led coalition waging war on Yemen, diplomatic sources say, despite massive civilian casualties caused by the coalition bombing.

"There is a desire to show that France is doing something. It says some deliveries have been suspended in the past, but there is nothing to show that," a source close to the matter said, Reuters reported.

A French diplomatic source claimed Paris has an export control system that takes into account the nature of the goods, the end user, human rights and regional situation. He, however, declined to say if any sales to the Saudi-led coalition had been stopped.

A second diplomatic source said, "We're told that there is a closer look at French arms exports to the [Saudi-led] coalition, but there is no information on either the suspension or cancellation of contracts."

## Daesh Terrorists Clash With Militants in Syria's Idlib

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – Daesh terrorists battled other terrorist factions in Syria in the northwestern province of Idlib on Friday, a monitoring group and a militant commander said.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Daesh terrorists left a besieged pocket of territory at the intersection of Aleppo, Idlib and Hama provinces, and then went to southern Idlib.

A military news outlet run by Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement, which is fighting on the side of the Syrian government, reported gains by the army and its allies against Daesh in that pocket.

A commander in the alliance fighting alongside Syria's army said the Daesh terrorists left the enclave. "The pocket is finished. A crossing was opened till they exited, and then it was closed," the commander said.

The Syrian army could not be reached for comment. A Syrian military statement said troops and allied forces

had gained control of several towns in rural parts of Hama, Idlib, and Aleppo provinces.

"The strategic importance of this achievement is that it ends the presence of the terrorist Daesh organization in both Aleppo and Hama provinces," the statement said. The advance also secures supply routes between Hama and Aleppo and links them to the southeast desert near the Iraqi border, it said. The military said it had destroyed terrorist targets.

Idlib is the largest chunk of Syrian territory held by terrorist factions opposed to President Bashar al-Assad's government. Terrorist factions, including al Qaeda's former affiliate in the Syrian war, dominate the province.

A UN spokesperson said Saturday that Secretary-General Antonio Guterres "is following closely the alarming military escalation throughout Syria and the dangerous spillover across its borders."

In a statement, his spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said that "the latest



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events come as the Syrian people suffer through one of the most violent periods in nearly seven years of conflict. Over 1,000 civilian casualties from airstrikes were reported in the first week of February alone."

"The Secretary-General stresses once

again that all concerned in Syria and the region have a responsibility and must abide by international law and relevant Security Council resolutions. He calls on all to work for an immediate and unconditional de-escalation of violence and exercise restraint," Dujarric said.

**Report:**

## Bahrain Regime Committed Nearly 1,000 Rights Abuses in January

MANAMA (Press TV) – A new report on the rights situation in Bahrain has suggested that regime of Manama committed around 1,000 cases of abuse against dissidents in January, 2018.

The report by the Bahrain Forum for Human Rights (BFHR) published Saturday said a total of 995 cases of rights violation by the Bahraini government were recorded past month.

It said 121 people, including six minors, were arrested arbitrarily during house raids by government forces over the past month. The report added that authorities used torture and other forms of violence

against 18 detainees, including eight minors and four women, in prison facilities and police stations across the island country. Some 17 Bahrainis also disappeared in January, most of them people with records of participating in anti-government protests.

The finding of the report, published in a pro-opposition Bahraini website, also showed that the Bahraini judiciary handed down a total of 679 years of prison sentences to 77 opponents of the government, merely due to their contribution to the protests or sympathizing with notable dissident figures.

The report said Manama's continued ban on holding Friday prayer sermons in the village of Diraz was also a major case of human rights violation. The village, located to the northwest of Bahrain and a main bastion of reform movement in the country, was slapped with the ban in the summer of 2016.

For more than seven years now, Bahrain has seen almost daily protests and demonstrations against the authoritarian rule of the Al Khalifah family. Dozens have been killed over the past years while hundreds, including notable opposition figures, remain behind

bars over role in the protests.

On Saturday, the Bahraini police used tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse a peaceful protest in the Manama neighborhood of Bilad al-Ghadim. The tough action sparked clashes between police and protesters with reports suggesting some were injured and transferred to a nearby hospital.

There were also reports of protests in Abu Saiba, Sitra and Karzakan as people stood defiant of government bans on demonstrations planned for next week to mark the anniversary of the uprising in Bahrain in February 2011.