

ISTANBUL (Reuters) – At least one person was killed and four others were left under rubble after an eight-storey residential building collapsed in Istanbul, Turkish private broadcaster NTV said on Wednesday.

It was not immediately clear why the building, in the Kartal district, had collapsed. Several police, ambulances and firefighters were sent to the site, NTV said.

Emergency teams were trying to reach the four individuals left under the rubble, NTV said.

*Value of each man depends upon the art and skill which he has attained.*

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

## 'Terrorists Move Chlorine Barrels to Northwestern Syria'

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – Members of the Jabhat Fateh al-Sham terrorist group, formerly known as al-Nusra Front, have reportedly moved barrels with banned chlorine to a town in Syria's militant-held northwestern province of Idlib, using vehicles of the so-called White Helmets civil defense group.

Head of Damascus-based Syrian Human Rights Network, Ahmad Kazem, told Russia's Sputnik news agency on Tuesday that the members of the Western-backed aid group, which has been repeatedly accused of cooperating with terrorists and staging false flag gas attacks, have started to install cameras in a number of hospitals in a bid to implicate Syrian government forces with the use of chlorine.

"According to our data, several chlorine containers were transported from [the northwestern Syrian city of] Jisr al-Shugur to Khan Shaykhun town, in the south of the Idlib province. The transportation took place under coordination and cooperation between the White Helmets and Jabhat Fateh al-Sham terrorists. The containers with the toxic substance were transported in two ambulances," Kazem pointed out.

The rights activist went on to



*This file picture shows members of the Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, formerly known as al-Nusra Front, terrorist group in an undisclosed location in Syria.*

say that the containers were later put into freezers, so the chemicals could be used for attacks against civilians.

On October 21 last year, informed sources, requesting not to be named, told Syria's official news agency SANA that Jabhat Fateh al-Sham terrorists had moved banned chlorine and sarin munitions from the small city of Ma'arrat Misrin, located 50 kilometers southwest of Aleppo, to Jisr al-Shughour.

Meanwhile, the Syrian government has accused U.S. military

forces and their allied Kurdish militants from the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) of blocking deliveries of critical humanitarian supplies to internally displaced people in the country's embattled eastern province of Dayr al-Zawr.

Mohammed Dhiab, the media coordinator for the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) in the province, told Syria's official news agency SANA on Tuesday that a convoy of 10 truckloads of drinking water, medicine, hygiene products and other basic commodities was once

again prevented from passing al-Salihyah crossing point.

He added that the convoy had been stopped at the Kurdish-controlled crossing point for five consecutive days before being denied entry under the pretext that American forces in the area had not allowed the passage.

Dhiab further noted that US troops and SDF militants placed concrete barriers and barricades in front of the trucks at last.

The official went on to say that the aid convoy had been provided by the Syrian government, SARC as well as the Russian Coordination Center, and was destined for the town of Hajin, which lies along the Euphrates River and south of the provincial capital city of Dayr al-Zawr.

On January 31, US forces and Kurdish militants prevented an aid convoy from the Syrian government and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent from reaching villagers in the rural outskirts of Dayr al-Zawr despite guarantees from the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) concerning free and unimpeded deliveries of humanitarian aid shipments throughout the Syrian territory.

## Amnesty Accuses UAE of Diverting Arms to 'Militias' in Yemen



*Houthi Ansarullah fighters who fight against the Saudi-led coalition stand guard during a rally to mark the third anniversary of the Houthis' takeover of the Yemeni capital, in Sanaa, Yemen.*

DUBAI (Dispatches) – Amnesty International accused the United Arab Emirates on Wednesday of diverting arms supplied by Western and other states to "unaccountable militias accused of war crimes" in Yemen.

The UAE and Saudi Arabia are leading a military coalition, including local forces drawn from various Yemeni factions, that is trying to restore the former government ousted from power in 2014 by the Houthi Ansarullah group.

"Emirati forces receive billions of dollars' worth of arms from Western states and others, only to syphon them off to militias in Yemen that answer to no-one and are known to be committing war crimes," Amnesty said in a statement.

"The proliferation of these fighting forces is a recipe for disaster for Yemeni civilians who have already been killed in their thousands, while millions more are on the brink of famine as a direct result of the war," the human rights group said.

The UAE government media office did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the Amnesty statement.

U.S. news channel CNN also reported on Tuesday that Saudi Arabia and its allies have handed over U.S.-made weapons to al-Qaeda-linked terrorists and other terrorist groups fighting in the kingdom's

war on Yemen.

Serial numbers and footage obtained by CNN showed that heavy weaponry sold to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates was passed down to terrorists as part of its war effort in Yemen.

Some of these arms were later captured by Houthi fighters after they were left abandoned or sold to other groups.

Abu Dhabi and Riyadh had reportedly given the arms to curry favor and loyalty among local groups fighting in Yemen.

Among the weapons given to these groups by Saudi Arabia and the UAE include Mine-Resistant Armored Protection Vehicles (MRAP) and Oshkosh armored vehicles - military hardware that is used by the U.S. army.

U.S. military officials who spoke to CNN said the UAE and Saudi Arabia had violated the terms of its defense agreement by handing over arms to third parties.

The officials added that there was an ongoing investigation into the matter.

Yemen has been wracked by violence since 2015, when Saudi Arabia launched a devastating air campaign aimed at returning a former fugitive president to power.

Tens of thousands of people, including civilians, are believed to have been killed and the UN estimates that around 14 million Yemenis are at risk of famine.

## Afghan President Says Gov't Must Be 'Decision-Maker' in Any Peace Deal

KABUL (Dispatches) – Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani said on Tuesday no peace deal between the Taliban and the United States could be finalized without involving his government as "the decision-maker".

Ghani's government has so far been shut out of the evolving talks between Taliban negotiators and U.S. envoys to end more than 17 years of war, with the militant group branding his government a U.S. puppet.

He made his remarks in a television interview as Afghan opposition politicians, including his predecessor Hamid Karzai, met Taliban representatives in Moscow.

"At the end of any peace deal, the decision-maker will be the government of Afghanistan," Ghani told TOLO News, the country's largest private television station.

"No power in the country can

dissolve the government," said Ghani, who added he was ready to "stand and defend our country".

"Rest assured that no one can push us aside," he said.

With both sides hailing progress in talks in Qatar last month, U.S. peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad is due to meet Taliban representatives there again on Feb. 25.

Ghani's comments were some of the most extensive since he met Khalilzad in Kabul last week after the latest round of talks.

Meanwhile, President Donald Trump told Americans on Tuesday his administration had accelerated talks for a political settlement in Afghanistan, and would be able to reduce U.S. troops there as negotiations advance to end America's longest war.

"Great nations do not fight



*Taliban representatives take part in the second round of multilateral peace talks on Afghanistan, in the Russian capital of Moscow, on November 9, 2018.*

endless wars," Trump said in his annual State of the Union address to Congress, in which he also claimed U.S. troops had nearly defeated Daesh terrorists in Syria and it was time to bring them home.

After 17 years of war in Afghanistan, Trump praised "the unmatched valor" of U.S. forces.

He said his administration was holding talks with a number of groups, including the Taliban.

### Lebanon's Berri:

## Zionist Regime Violating Lebanese Borders in Oil Exploration

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime has breached Lebanon's waters by licensing a company to "exploit an area" for oil and gas near disputed borders, Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri said on Wednesday.

The two sides have an unresolved maritime dispute over a sea zone of about 860 sq km (330 square miles) which extends along the edge of three of Lebanon's energy blocks.

U.S. diplomats mediated between them last year after a spike in tensions that also involved a row over a wall the Zionist regime built on the Lebanese border.

"(It is) a dangerous matter. Israel has licensed and exploited an area adjacent to the Lebanese southern maritime borders," MPs from Berri's Amal party quoted him as saying on Wednesday after a meeting.

"This is an infringement on Lebanese sovereignty and targets our oil wealth and waters."

The occupying regime's energy ministry did not immediately comment.

Berri vowed "not to remain silent" and will bring it up with the Italian prime minister visiting Beirut this week, as well as other foreign states, the lawmakers said.

Ali Bazzi, an Amal lawmaker, said the occupying regime pressed on with the "violation" even though the companies on the Lebanese side have stayed away from the contentious border.

Lebanon sits on the Levant Basin in the eastern Mediterranean - along with Cyprus, Egypt, the occupied territories and Syria - where a number big gas fields have been discovered since 2009.

Lebanon has signed its first offshore oil and gas exploration and production agreements for two energy blocks, including one disputed by the regime. A consortium of France's Total, Italy's Eni and Russia's Novatek signed the contracts.

## Turkey Probes Deportation of Egyptian Facing Death Penalty

ANKARA (Dispatches) – Turkey will investigate the deportation of an Egyptian facing execution in Cairo over a car bomb and has suspended eight policemen involved, the Istanbul governor's office said on Wednesday.

Mohamed Abdelhafiz Ahmed Hussein, whom the Muslim Brotherhood movement identifies as a member, was among 28 people sentenced in absentia to death in July 2017 for killing Egypt's public prosecutor in the attack, according to state media.

He was sent back to Egypt last month from Istanbul's main Ataturk airport on arrival from Somalia for not having a visa.

The case adds to strained Turkey-Egypt relations since the army ousted President Mohamed Mursi, of the Brother-

hood, following mass protests against his rule in 2013.

The Istanbul governor's office said on Tuesday that when Hussein arrived, there was no information he was facing trial anywhere, and he did not request protection, so officials deemed him an "unacceptable passenger" due to lack of a Turkish visa.

In a separate statement on Wednesday, the governor's office said a commission had been set up to investigate the deportation and eight police officers were suspended from duty over it.

An adviser to Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said it was wrong to repatriate anyone facing charges in Egypt and the matter needed checking.