

Turkey 'Hopes' to Find Solution to Idlib Standoff With Russia

ANKARA (Dispatches) – Turkey’s foreign minister said on Tuesday he hoped his country and Russia could find a solution over the northern Syrian region of Idlib, a terrorist-held enclave which the Syrian government says it aims to recapture.

The Idlib region, a refuge for civilians and terrorists displaced from other areas of Syria as well as militants, was hit by a wave of air strikes and shelling last week, in a possible prelude to a full-scale government offensive.

Turkey, which has backed some militant groups in the region and set up a dozen military observation posts, is trying to avert an attack by forces loyal to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, who is backed by Moscow.

Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said it was important to distinguish between “terrorists”, militants and up to three million civilians in Idlib.

“We need to determine these terrorist (groups) and eliminate them with intelligence and military forces,” he said in Ankara ahead of talks with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov, whose country has backed Assad militarily.

Idlib is controlled by an array of terrorist groups, with extremist militants believed to be the dominant force there.

“We need to differentiate between moderate rebels and radicals. The local people and the moderate rebels are very disturbed by these terrorists so we need to fight against



A general view taken with a drone shows part of the terrorist-held Idlib city, Syria June 8, 2017

them all together,” Cavusoglu said.

Last week UN humanitarian adviser Jan Egeland said that Turkey, Russia and Iran had all agreed to “do their utmost to avoid” a battle in Idlib.

The Syrian army dropped leaflets over Idlib province on Thursday, urging people to agree to a return of state rule, telling them the seven-year war was nearing its end.

Lavrov, speaking at a news conference with Cavusoglu, also said Moscow was sur-

prised at what he said was Western opposition to refugee returns to Syria.

“A huge (portion) of Syria has been freed of terrorists. It’s time to rebuild infrastructure, all living necessities for refugees from Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and from Europe to start returning to their home,” he said.

Russia’s foreign ministry said on Monday a four-way Syria summit “is planned in the upcoming future”, with the leaders of Russia, France, Turkey and Germany attending.

Saudi Dissident Preacher Dies 'After Torture' in Regime Prison

RIYADH (Press TV) – A political dissident and Muslim preacher in Saudi Arabia has reportedly died as a result of torture while in regime custody as a crackdown led by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman against Muslim preachers and intellectuals widens in the conservative oil-rich kingdom.

The rights group Prisoners of Consciousness, which is an independent non-governmental organization advocating human rights in Saudi Arabia, announced in a post on its official

Twitter page on Tuesday that Sheikh Suleiman al-Doweesh has lost his life due to severe torture he was subjected to during criminal investigations.

The news came only two days after Saudi authorities arrested Shaikh Nasser al-Omar, a former professor at the Faculty of Fundamentals of Religion at Riyadh-based Imam Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University and suspended his Twitter account.

Saudi Arabia has lately stepped up politically-motivated arrests,

prosecution and conviction of peaceful dissident writers and human rights campaigners.

Saudi officials have also intensified security measures in the Shia-populated and oil-rich Eastern Province.

Eastern Province has been the scene of peaceful demonstrations since February 2011. Protesters have been demanding reforms, freedom of expression, the release of political prisoners, and an end to economic and religious discrimination against the

oil-rich region.

The protests have been met with a heavy-handed crackdown by the regime with security forces increasing security measures across the province.

Over the past years, Riyadh has also redefined its anti-terrorism laws to target activism.

In January 2016, Saudi authorities executed Shia cleric, Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr, who was an outspoken critic of the policies of the Riyadh regime. Nimr had been arrested in Qatif in 2012.

Zionist Regime Arrests, Questions Pro-BDS U.S. Journalist

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – A leading Jewish-American journalist, who supports a pro-Palestine boycott campaign against the Zionist regime, says he has been detained at Tel Aviv’s airport and questioned about his political activities.

In an article published in The Forward magazine, Peter Beinart said that he had been taken to a separate room at the Ben Gurion airport and interrogated for about an hour upon his arrival for a family visit.

He also noted that an unnamed airport security official had asked him about a protest he had attended previously in the West Bank city of al-Khalil against a lack of basic rights for Palestinians.

The interrogation was “depressing,” he said.

“The session ended when my interrogator asked me, point blank, if I was planning to attend another protest. I answered truthfully: No. With that I was sent back to the holding room.”

Beinart, a contributing editor at The Atlantic magazine and a CNN political commentator, stressed that his detention further proved how Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been “emboldened” by U.S. President Donald Trump.

“My detention is one more, not particularly significant, example of how Trump has emboldened Netanyahu. An Israeli government led by men

who respect neither liberal democracy nor the rule of law now knows it has kindred spirits in Washington. A week before my detention, something similar happened to my friend and former colleague Simone Zimmerman,” he said.

Earlier this month, Zimmerman, an anti-occupation Jewish American activist, was held by Zionist authorities at the border between Egypt and the occupied territories and interrogated about her political opinions.

Beinart further touched on the recently-approved Israeli legislation that declares the occupied lands exclusively “the nation-state of the Jewish people,” saying, “Israel, like America, is getting uglier.”

Meanwhile, U.S.-based pro-Israel group J Street denounced the American journalist’s detention and urged Israel to end its policy of “political interrogations” of those criticizing the regime.

The Zionist regime has stepped up its clampdown on groups and individuals deemed to be supporting the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, a Palestinian-led international campaign launched more than a decade ago with the aim of ending the Zionist regime’s occupation of Palestinian territories.

The movement also pursues equal rights for Palestinians by exerting pressure on the Israeli regime via economic and cultural boycotts.

Gaza Goods Crossing May Reopen

AL-QUDS (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime will reopen its only goods crossing with the Gaza Strip on Wednesday if calm is maintained, after having prevented most deliveries since July 9 over border tensions, the war ministry said Tuesday.

“Defense (war) Minister Avigdor Lieberman this afternoon held a situation assessment” with security chiefs, his office said in a statement on Tuesday.

“In the meeting it was decided that if the quiet which has been maintained in Gaza continues until tomorrow morning, Ker-

em Shalom crossing will open tomorrow at 9:00 am (0600 GMT) and the fishing zone will be expanded back to nine miles from the beach.”

Kerem Shalom has been closed to most goods since July 9. Fuel has intermittently been banned during that time, including since August 2, though food and medicine has been allowed.

Last month, the Zionist regime also reduced the limits of the fishing zone it allows fishermen off the blockaded Gaza Strip to three nautical miles offshore.

Protests and clashes broke out on March 30 and have led to months of tension that have also seen several military flare-ups.

At least 169 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza by Zionist fire since March 30, mostly during clashes and protests.

There have been efforts by United Nations officials and Egypt to secure a long-term truce between the regime and Hamas.

A fragile truce came into effect Thursday night, mediated by Egypt and the UN, according to a source close to the negotiations.

Iran...

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soon raise oil output by up to 2 million barrels per day (bpd) but energy strategists have dismissed an abrupt increase in oil production as political “noise”.

“This incident with the Saudis and the U.S. administration is just noise. You cannot order 2 million barrels like ordering a coffee somewhere,” Beat Wittmann, a partner at financial consultancy Porta Advisors, told has CNBC.

Trump’s surprise move has pushed oil prices above \$78 a barrel for the first time since late 2014.

Oil prices jumped early on Tuesday, after Saudi Arabia reported that it had cut its crude oil production in July compared to June.

It remains unclear to what extent higher gasoline prices would hurt Republicans at the upcoming polls, or whether voters will connect Trump’s policies to gas costs. However, the threat of elevated fuel prices comes as the U.S. trade war with its biggest trade partners risks putting upward pressure on consumer prices and denting Americans’ view of the economy.

Taliban...

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are going from house to house to find government officials or their relatives to kill,” said one resident, Sayed Zia. “Those who can are fleeing.”

On Monday, the Afghan defense minister said at least 100 security forces had been killed in the fighting in Ghazni so far. Afghan security forces, beset by desertions and low morale, have suffered staggering casualties in recent years.

Analysts have said the insurgents may be seeking to demonstrate strength as they come under increasing pressure since an unprecedented ceasefire in June to join peace talks.

The assault on Ghazni and the fall of the Chenaya base also illustrate how stretched Afghan forces are across the country, said analyst Abdul Hamid Sofof.

“The Taliban know this and they make Afghan forces fight on several fronts, making them run thin,” said Sofof.

The insurgents have overrun provincial capitals before, including western Farah in May and northern Kunduz in 2015. Each time, they failed to hold the city, pushed out by security forces within days.

Ghazni lies along the major Kabul-Kandahar highway, effectively serving as a gateway between the capital and the militant strongholds in the south.

Hundreds of people trying to reach Kabul from Iran and other provinces were stranded at a bus station in southern Kandahar Tuesday, unable to travel further due to the fighting, an AFP reporter there said.

Some said they had been stuck for days, and were running out of money and food. “For God’s sake,” one man told AFP. “Stop fighting and let us go home.”

Car...

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Trump has a history of tweeting about violence, or alleged violence, in London. He angered many when he said a London hospital was like a war zone because of knife violence.

Parliament has been a target for attacks several times over the years, and security has grown progressively tighter. Concrete and steel barriers protect against vehicle attacks, armed police officers patrol the grounds and visitors undergo airport-style security screening.

Since a series of vehicle attacks in London last year, concrete barriers or bollards have been erected along bridges and beside some major roads to prevent cars mounting the sidewalk to hit pedestrians.

Parliament was the site of an attack in March 2017, when Khalid Masood ploughed a car into crowds on Westminster Bridge, killing four people. Masood abandoned his car and then stabbed and killed a police officer before being shot dead in a courtyard outside Parliament.

Less than three months later, a van rammed into pedestrians on London Bridge before three men abandoned the vehicle and attacked weekend revelers in the nearby Borough Market. Eight people were killed and 48 injured in the attack.

On June 19, 2017, a man drove a van into a crowd of worshippers leaving a mosque in north London, killing one man and injuring eight others.

The official terrorist threat level for Britain is “severe,” indicating an attack is considered highly likely.