

KUNDUZ (Xinhua) – At least seven Taliban militants and three government security personnel were killed and eight others, including five militants, wounded following a fierce clash in Afghanistan's northern Kunduz province, an official said Saturday.

The clash broke out at about 03:00 a.m. local time, when Taliban militants launched a grouping attack on security check posts in Charkhab and Baghe-Mir areas of Khan Abad district.

Police forces returned fire, resulting in the death of seven militants and three policemen, said Inamudin Rahmani, the provincial police spokesman.

Unfortunate is he who cannot gain a few sincere friends during his life and more unfortunate is the one who has gained them and then lost them (through his deeds).

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

## U.S. Airstrikes Kill 40 People in Syria's Dayr al-Zawr



The U.S.-led coalition killed some 40 people in airstrikes in Syria's Dayr al-Zawr province, the Syrian Arab News Agency reported.

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – The U.S. killed some 40 people, mainly women and children, in airstrikes in Syria's Dayr al-Zawr province, the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) reported.

The reports come after U.S. Col. Sean Ryan, confirmed that coalition strikes had taken place in the area on Thursday, insisting that no civilian casualties have been recorded.

Prior to his statement, SANA reported on Thursday that 17 civilians had been killed in Bu-

Badran. However, later in the day, it said the civilian death toll from U.S. airstrikes in Dayr al-Zawr province had reached 23. According to the news agency, the strikes targeted the residential areas of the villages of Bu-Badran and al-Sousa.

The coalition regularly carries out airstrikes in the eastern Dayr al-Zawr province. On November 9, media reported that 26 civilians, including women and children, were killed in an airstrike by the U.S. on the city of Hajin.

On November 13, the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates condemned a recent airstrike by the U.S. against the eastern town of al-Shaafah, which left more than 60 people dead and injured, arguing that the massacre clearly pointed to the fact that members of the military alliance had no respect for moral values, international rules and regulations besides the lives of innocent civilians.

The ministry, in two separate letters, addressed to United Na-

tions Secretary General Antonio Guterres and the rotating president of the UN Security Council Ma Zhaoxu, called on the Security Council to fulfill its responsibilities and stop U.S.-led aerial assaults.

It also asked the world body to propose an international, independent and impartial mechanism to investigate the crimes being perpetrated by the U.S.-led coalition.

The letters noted that the coalition was deliberately targeting Syria civilians and making use of internationally banned weapons, including white phosphorus bombs, in Syria.

The ministry stressed that U.S.-led coalition airstrikes were meant to kill as many Syrian people as possible, prolong the ongoing Syrian conflict, destroy the country's infrastructure and undermine its sovereignty and territorial integrity in flagrant violation of all UN Security Council resolutions on Syria.

The letters concluded that the embarrassing silence of the Security Council had encouraged the US-led coalition to kill more Syrian civilians and destroy their property.

The U.S.-led coalition has been conducting airstrikes against what are said to be Daesh targets inside Syria since September 2014 without any authorization from the Damascus government or a UN mandate.

### UN Humanitarian Chief: Yemen Suffers World's Worst Food Insecurity



The file photo shows malnourished Ferial Elias, 2, as she is being weighed at a malnutrition treatment ward at Thawra hospital in Hudaydah, Yemen, November 3, 2018.

UNITED NATIONS (Dispatches) – The UN humanitarian chief has warned that Yemen suffers the worst food insecurity in the world and the ongoing conflict is worsening circumstances for a humanitarian response.

"Yemen faces the largest food security emergency in the world, and the worsening humanitarian outlook requires urgent action to reduce the likelihood of significant loss of life," UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock told the Security Council, citing FEWS-Net, a leading provider of analysis on acute food insecurity.

Lowcock revealed that, despite calls for the violence to stop, UN sources have observed nearly 800 separate incidents of shelling, armed clashes, or air strikes across Yemen, often with devastating consequences for civilians.

Meanwhile, the UN envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths says the warring sides in Yemen are close to a deal on exchanging prisoners as a confidence-building measure ahead of the upcoming talks in Sweden, which both sides have promised to attend.

The United Nations has received firm assurances from the warring parties that they are committed to attending talks in Sweden, the UN envoy told the Security Council.

Griffiths said the UN intends to convene the Sweden talks very soon given the two sides' "renewed commitment" to work on a political solution to end the war waged by the Saudi-led coalition in 2015 in a bid to push back the Houthi Ansarullah movement and restore to power former Yemeni President Abdrabbu Mansour Hadi, a close ally of Riyadh.

"With this in mind, I intend to reconvene the parties shortly and to do so in Sweden. I believe we are close to resolving issues to make this happen," Griffiths said. "I have received firm assurances

from the leadership of the Yemeni parties... that they are committed to attending these consultations. I believe they are genuine."

Griffiths plans to travel to the Yemeni capital of Sana'a next week to finalize arrangements and offered to travel with the Houthi delegation to Sweden after the Saudi-led coalition prevented the Ansarullah delegation from attending the peace talks.

According to the UN envoy, the Saudi-led coalition invading Yemen has agreed to "logistical arrangements" to pave the way for talks including medical evacuations out of Sana'a.

Griffiths announced he was close to reaching a deal on an exchange of prisoners and detainees, in a further confidence-building measure ahead of planned talks.

"This is a crucial moment for Yemen," he said, warning that a flare-up of fighting on the ground could derail the peace effort.

The Saudi-led coalition's devastating war on Yemeni civilians has unleashed the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Global pressure to end the Saudi-led military campaign in Yemen has grown following the killing by Saudi agents of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, which sparked global outrage.

Eight million people are affected by severe food shortages, according to UN officials, who warn that up to 14 million -- or half of Yemen's population -- are at risk of famine.

After a visit to Yemen, the head of the UN World Food Programme warned that the country faces a full-blown famine in about six months because of the economic collapse from the war.

"What I have seen in Yemen this week is the stuff of nightmares, of horror, of deprivation, of misery," David Beasley told the council. "Children are already dying."

### Trump Says Not Considering Extraditing Gulen to Turkey

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – U.S. President Donald Trump said Saturday he was not considering extraditing a U.S.-based Muslim cleric to Turkey as part of an effort to ease pressure on Saudi Arabia.

"No, it's not under consideration," Trump told reporters when asked about potential extradition of Fethullah Gulen, who is wanted in Turkey over accusations he was involved in a failed 2016 coup.

NBC News reported Thursday the Trump administration had explored whether it could extra-

dite Gulen, as a way to persuade Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan to ease pressure on Saudi Arabia over the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul last month.

The Justice Department had denied on Friday the matter had been discussed.

On Saturday, Trump said he got along well with Erdogan, and spoke of a desire to improve relations with Turkey. He also described Saudi Arabia as "a truly spectacular ally in terms of jobs and economic develop-

ment."

Gulen, a Green Card-holder, has been living in Pennsylvania since the late 1990s.

The US and Turkey have been engaged in negotiations over a series of sensitive diplomatic issues over the past few months, including a deal for last month's release of an American pastor, Andrew Brunson, who was imprisoned in Turkey and an agreement for joint U.S. and Turkish military patrols in Manbij, Syria.

Amid growing international pressure on the Saudi govern-

ment over the murder, the U.S. has tried in recent weeks to appease the Ankara government over the case, convincing Erdogan to ease its pressure on Riyadh.

The allegations of Washington's bid to extradite Erdogan's arch-foe seem to be part of the same scenario. However, a Turkish official says the government does not link its concerns about the Khashoggi murder with Gulen's extradition case.

"We definitely see no connection between the two," the official said.

### Daesh Terrorists Killed in Airstrike in Eastern Iraq

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – A number of Daesh terrorists were killed Saturday in an airstrike in Iraq's eastern province of Diyala, a provincial security source said.

Acting on intelligence reports, the Iraqi warplanes bombarded a Daesh hideout in Himreen mountainous area in northeast of the provincial capital Baquba, about 65 km northeast of Baghdad, Major Alaa al-Saadi, from Diyala Operations Command said.

The bombardment destroyed the hideout and killed four terrorists, al-Saadi said.

The Iraqi forces are carrying continuing reconnaissance and surveillance in difference areas to track the terrorists and destroy their locations, al-Saadi added.

Despite repeated military operations in the Diyala province, remnants of Daesh terrorists are still hiding in some rugged areas near the border with Iran, and in the sprawling areas extending from the western part of the province to the Himreen mountain range.

Separately, a security source, speaking on condition of anonymity, told the independent Arabic-language National Iraqi News Agency that members of the Federal Police force, backed by Iraqi Air Force jets, carried out numerous operations in the Badush and Hatra districts of the northern province of Nineveh, killing over 20 Daesh terrorists in the process.

The source warned that sleeper cells of the terrorist group were still active in some parts of

Nineveh.

Former Iraqi prime minister Haider al-Abadi declared the end of military operations against Daesh in the Arab country on December 9, 2017.

On July 10 that year, he formally declared victory over Daesh in Mosul, which served as the terrorists' main urban stronghold in Iraq.

In the run-up to Mosul's liberation, Iraqi army soldiers and volunteer Hashd al-Sha'abi fighters had made sweeping gains against Daesh.

Iraqi forces took control of eastern Mosul in January 2017 after 100 days of fighting, and launched the battle in the west on February 19 last year.

Daesh began a terror campaign in Iraq in 2014, overrunning vast swathes in lightning attacks.

### Turkish Court Sentences Istanbul Airport Bombers to Life

ANKARA (Sputnik) – A criminal court in Turkey has sentenced six men to life in prison for their role in the 2016 bombings at Istanbul airport, which killed 45 people, state media reported.

The suspects were convicted of murder, constitutional violations, attempts on 142 lives and damage to property, the Anadolu news agency said.

Three blasts hit the entrance, exit and the parking lot of Ataturk International Airport in July 2016. Among those killed were 19 foreigners. Over 230 people were injured.

Ankara maintained that the attack was carried out by the Daesh terrorist group. The Turkish president said suspects in the case hailed from Russia, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.