

UN: Daesh Terrorists' Home States Must Take Them Back

NEW YORK (Press TV) – UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres says the home countries of Daesh terrorists captured in Iraq and Syria must take back their terrorist nationals.

"We need international cooperation to solve the problem," Guterres, who is attending the Paris Peace Forum alongside some 30 world leaders, told France's RTL radio. "We cannot just ask Iraq and Syria to solve the problem for everyone. There must be real international solidarity."

He said the wives and children of those terrorists must also be taken back and reintegrated into their respective societies.

Turkey, which neighbors both Iraq and Syria, has already started deporting captured Daesh terror-

ists to their home countries.

The Turkish army launched a cross-border offensive into northeastern Syria in a declared attempt to clear hostile Kurdish militants from border areas on October 9. Several terrorists escaped from a prison in northeastern Syria following the Turkish operation. Turkey says its troops have managed to capture some of those runaway Daesh terrorists.

The European Commission has announced that more than 2,500 people who once left various European countries to join the Daesh terrorist group in Iraq or Syria are currently unaccounted for.

Western countries have been reluctant to take back their militant nationals and their families.

A number of European countries, including France, have



Suspected Daesh terrorists are cramped in a prison cell in the northeastern Syrian city of Hasakah, on October 26, 2019.

started talks with Iraqi officials to convince them to hold trials for and keep the militants in Iraq. Daesh has already been driven out of all of its urban bastions both in Iraq and Syria, but its remnants carry out sporadic terror attacks in the two Arab countries.

Afghanistan to Release Senior Taliban Prisoners in Apparent Swap



Afghan security personnel escort Taliban and Daesh militants during an operation in Jalalabad Province, Afghanistan, on October 1, 2019.

KABUL (AFP) – Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has announced that three high-ranking Taliban prisoners would be released, in an apparent exchange for two Western hostages who were

kidnapped by the militants in 2016.

The three Taliban prisoners include Anas Haqqani, who was seized in 2014 and whose older brother is the deputy Taliban leader and

head of the Haqqani network, a notorious Taliban affiliate.

"We have decided to conditionally release three Taliban prisoners who... have been in Bagram prison in the custody of the Afghan government for some time," Ghani said in an announcement at the presidential palace.

He did not specify the fate of the Western hostages -- an Australian and an American -- and it was not clear when or where they would be freed.

But Ghani noted in his speech that "their health has been deteriorating while in the custody of the terrorists".

He added that the release of the two professors would "pave the way" for the start of unofficial direct talks between his government and the Taliban, who long have

refused to negotiate with Ghani's administration.

Ghani, flanked by his top security advisors, said the decision to release the three Taliban prisoners had been "very hard and necessary".

In August 2016, gunmen wearing military uniforms kidnapped two professors of the American University of Afghanistan in the heart of Kabul.

The two, American Kevin King and Australian Timothy Weeks, later appeared looking haggard in a Taliban hostage video, with the militants going on to say that King was in poor health.

A Taliban source in Pakistan told AFP on Tuesday that King had been "seriously ill", and the militants were worried he could die in their custody.

Over 2016 Failed Coup

Turkey Gives Life Sentences to Over 2,300 Defendants

ANKARA (Dispatches) – A total of 2,327 defendants have been handed life sentences in cases related to the 2016 defeated coup in Turkey.

According to data compiled by Anadolu Agency from judicial sources, following the July 15, 2016 defeated coup chief public prosecutors carried out over 100,000 investigations.

Out of 289 cases, 270 of them completed, a total of 3,838 defendants were convicted.

The Turkish courts ordered aggravated life sentences for 1,224 convicts.

Among them were 71 former generals, 829 former officers, 173 former sergeants, 50 former specialized sergeants and four former police officers.

Separately, 1,511 convicts were handed jail terms ranging from 14 months to 20 years, while some defenders were acquitted in nationwide cases. The remaining cases continue in the capital Ankara, Istanbul, and seven other provinces.

An unspecified number of defendants were also acquitted of their accusations in nationwide cases.

During the 2016 botched putsch, a faction of the Turkish military declared that it had seized control of the country and the government of Erdogan was no more in charge. The attempt was, however, suppressed

a few hours later.

Ankara has since accused U.S.-based opposition cleric Fethullah Gulen of having orchestrated the coup. The opposition figure is also accused of being behind a long-running campaign to topple the government via infiltrating the country's institutions, particularly the army, police and the judiciary.

Gulen has denounced the "despicable putsch" and reiterated that he had no role in it.

"Accusations against me related to the coup attempt are baseless and politically-motivated slanders," he said in a statement.

The 78-year-old cleric has also called on Ankara to end its "witch hunt" of his followers, a move he says is aimed at "weeding out anyone it deems disloyal to President Erdogan and his regime."

Turkish officials have frequently called on their U.S. counterparts to extradite Gulen, but their demands have not been taken heed of.

Turkey ended the nationwide state of emergency, imposed since the coup, in July last year, after seven three-month renewals.

Tens of thousands of people have been arrested in Turkey on suspicion of having links to Gulen and the failed coup. Many more, including military staff, civil servants and journalists, have been sacked or suspended from work over the same accusations.

Rockets...

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political leader, Akram Al-Ajouri. Israel's Army Radio described Al-Ajouri as head of Islamic Jihad's military wing.

At the scene of the Damascus strike, a Reuters journalist said the top floor of a two-storey building had been completely scorched. A neighbor said he had been woken up at around 4 a.m. by three explosions that had blown open the doors in his house.

Syrian state media said six people were wounded, describing the target as a civilian home in Mezzah, a western district of the capital where several embassies are located.

Bolivia ...

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become next in line for the presidency if chosen to head the Senate.

"Please excuse me if my voice breaks," Añez said between tears after arriving in Congress under heavy guard. "It's so hard to see Bolivians clashing, no matter which side they're on. They are being mistreated, and I'm asking you to cease the violence."

Añez said she would convene a legislative session Tuesday to consider accepting the formal resignation of Morales. It was unclear, however, if lawmakers could meet that soon because of insecurity in the capital.

As tensions grew, local media reported that Morales supporters were marching on La Paz from the nearby city of El Alto, a Morales stronghold, to try to break the street blockades thrown up by his opponents and reach the capital's main square.

Gen. Williams Kaliman, the chief of the armed forces, announced the joint police-military operation in a television address.

Rioters in downtown La Paz set tires and other barricades on fire as others went onto their rooftops to yell chants against Morales. Rock-throwing demonstrators also clashed in Cochabamba and other cities.

His presidency, the longest among serving leaders in the region and the longest ever in Bolivia, ended abruptly Sunday, hours after Morales had accepted calls for a new election by an Organization of American States team.

Morales stepped aside after the military chief called on him to quit, saying that was needed to restore peace and stability. His vice president also resigned as did the Senate president. The only other official listed by the constitution as a presidential successor, the head of the lower house, had resigned earlier.

Morales called the ouster a coup — a description echoed many leaders across the region worried at the military's role in deciding who should be president.

Michael Shifter, head of the Washington-based think tank Inter-American Dialogue, warned that Bolivia's polarization needs to be healed by new leadership.

"The temptation for any vengeance against Morales supporters needs to be resisted," Shifter said. "That would be a recipe for continued conflict and chaos that could well put at risk some of the country's undeniable socio-economic gains over the past decade."

Saudi...

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disappeared from Geneva prior to Al-Omari with authorities in Switzerland having no information about his whereabouts.

In October 2018, Saudi Prince Khalid Bin Farhan Al-Saud, who was based in Germany at the time, accused his country of trying to kidnap him. His revelation came just two weeks after Khashoggi went missing after entering the Saudi consulate in the Turkish city of Istanbul.

Over the past two years, hundreds of activists and human rights advocates have been arrested in Saudi Arabia.

Jordan Claims Foils Plot Against U.S., Zionist Diplomats

AMMAN (Dispatches) – Jordanian intelligence recently foiled a plot by two suspected militants to mount terror attacks against U.S. and Zionist diplomats alongside U.S. troops deployed at a military base in the south of the country, state-owned al-Rai newspaper has reported.

It said the suspects had planned to drive vehicles into their targets and attack them with firearms and knives. They would stand trial

in Jordan's state security court, it added.

Militants from Daesh and other terrorist groups have long targeted the U.S.-allied kingdom and dozens of militants are currently serving lengthy prison terms.

King Abdullah, a Middle East ally of Western powers purportedly against militancy, has been among the most vocal leaders in the region in warning of threats posed by terrorist groups.

Several incidents over the past few years have jolted the Arab kingdom, which has been comparatively unscathed by the uprisings, civil wars and terrorism that have swept the Middle East since 2011.

Jordan claimed last year it had foiled a Daesh plot that included plans for a series of attacks on security installations, shopping malls and moderate religious figures. It arrested the suspects.