

Britain's Prison Policy a Failure: Deputy British PM

LONDON (PRESS TV) – Britain's growing prison population has emerged as a major national concern and an election campaign issue, with British Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg slamming the government's

has doubled since the mid-90s, leaving thousands of children separated from their mothers every year," Clegg emphasized in his prepared remarks.

"Half of those women have suf-

85,000, compared to fewer than 49,000 inmates in British prisons in 1994, saying that the additional 36,000 inmates in jails do not necessarily indicate that there are more dangerous people in the country than the past.

"That is not proof that prison is 'working.' It's a litany of despair," Clegg argued. "'Prison works' is a slogan, not a solution. It is not working when it routinely turns first time offenders into hardened criminals."

He also underlined that vulnerable women, people with major mental health issues, and drug abusers are "all crammed like sardines into crowded prisons."

The British politician further revealed that nearly half of the UK's prisoners have no formal qualifications, a quarter were taken into care as children and two thirds have tried class A drugs.

According to November 2014 figures, the population of female prisoners in the UK is 3,956 while the male inmate population stands at 81,905.

Britain reportedly has one of the highest rates of incarceration in Western Europe.



Britain's Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg

prison policy as a "failure."

In a Monday speech outlining his Liberal Democrat Party's justice policy, Clegg censured the rising prison population in England and Wales as "a sign of failure," focusing particularly on the doubling of Britain's female prison population since the 1990's, The Guardian reports.

"The number of women in prison

ferred domestic abuse and one in three has suffered sexual abuse. Half suffer from anxiety or depression and a quarter have reported symptoms of psychosis. Nearly half of all women prisoners, and one in five men, have tried to kill themselves at some point in their lives."

The senior British official further pointed to the country's current prison population of more than

Ukraine Says It Cannot Withdraw Heavy Weapons



Members of the Ukrainian armed forces ride military vehicles near Artemivsk, eastern Ukraine, February 22, 2015.

KIEV (Reuters) – Ukraine's military said on Monday it could not start withdrawing heavy weapons from the front line in the east as required under a tenuous ceasefire because pro-Russian separatists who advanced last week were still at-

tacking its positions.

A truce to end fighting that has killed more than 5,600 people appeared stillborn last week after rebels ignored it to capture the strategic town of Debaltseve in a punishing defeat for Kiev.

Nevertheless, the peace deal's Eu-

ropean sponsors still hold out hope it can be salvaged, now that the Moscow-backed separatists have achieved that objective.

Kiev says it fears the rebels, backed by reinforcements of Russian troops, are planning to advance deeper into territory the Kremlin calls "New Russia". Moscow denies aiding the rebels.

Fighting has diminished since Kiev's forces abandoned Debaltseve in defeat last Wednesday, and there were hopeful signs for the truce over the weekend, with an overnight exchange of around 200 prisoners late on Saturday and an agreement on Sunday to begin pulling back artillery from the front.

But Kiev said on Monday that it still could not start the artillery withdrawal.

"Given that the positions of Ukrainian servicemen continue to be shelled, there can not yet be any talk of pulling back weapons," spokesman Vladislav Seleznyov said in a televised briefing.

550th Anniversary of Kazakh Statehood in 2015

ASTANA (Press Release) - President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev said that the country will celebrate the 550th anniversary of Kazakh statehood in 2015.

Many regard these remarks of the Kazakhstan president is a response to Vladimir Putin's statement that the Kazakhs had never had their own statehood until Nazarbayev established it.

"He has done a unique thing. He created a state in a territory that had never had a state before. The Kazakhs had no

statehood. From this perspective, he is a unique figure both in the post-Soviet space and in Kazakhstan," Putin said on August 29.

Nazarbayev's announcement rests on the history of Kazakh Khanate, which was established back in the 15th century.

"In 1465 Kerey and Janybek created the first Khanate, and the Kazakh statehood begins its history from that time. It may not have been a state in the modern sense of this word, neither did it occupy the present territory (of

Kazakhstan), or enjoyed its fame and prestige in the world. But the same is true for all the other states of that era. What matters is that back then the foundation was laid and we are the successors of the great deeds of our ancestors," Nazarbayev said at a meeting with activists of Astana city on October 22.

The Kazakh Khanate was founded by sultans Kerey and Janybek after several tribes under their control departed from the area of influence of Abu'l-Khayr Khan to Mogolistan. The

Four Dead, One Seriously Injured in Texas Shooting

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – Four people were dead and one woman was in serious condition on Monday after gunfire erupted at two homes in Killeen, Texas, according to local police.

The dead included a 30-year-old man suspected of shooting three people in one home before forcing his wife back to their neighboring house, where the two were later found with fatal gunshot wounds, Killeen police said in a statement.

Police said they responded to a 911 call of a disturbance Sunday night and found three gunshot vic-

tims.

Officers learned the suspect had fled with his 28-year-old wife back to their house on the same street. Shortly after, shots were heard coming from inside the suspect's house, police said.

Police did not release the victims' names pending notification of their relatives.

The suspect shot two women, ages 29 and 41, and a 40-year-old man at the first home, then forced his own wife back to their house, a preliminary police investigation showed.

Egypt Closes Embassy in Yemen

SANA'A (PRESS TV) – Egypt has closed its embassy in Yemen and evacuated its ambassador as

Earlier in the day, Japan had said it was temporarily closing its embassy for fears of worsening vio-



Yemeni soldiers stand guard outside the Egyptian embassy in the capital, Sana'a, after it closed on February 23, 2015.

well as all the diplomatic staff over what it termed as "deteriorating security situation" in the impoverished Arab state.

"The Egyptian diplomatic mission in Sana'a headed by Ambassador Youssef al-Sharqawi returned to Cairo on Monday due to the bad security situation in Yemen," Egypt's official MENA news agency reported.

"The Egyptian embassy in Sana'a was closed after the departure of the mission," it added.

Egypt is not the first country to shut its embassy in Sana'a.

On February 16, Turkey also closed its embassy in the Yemeni capital and suspended its diplomatic activities there.

"We hope that the authority of the state is reestablished in Yemen so that we can resume our diplomatic services in this friendly state," the Turkish Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

lence.

The Emirati Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced on February 14 the closure of the United Arab Emirates diplomatic mission in Yemen due to what it claimed to be the increasing deterioration of the political and security situation in the country.

In a separate development on the same day, Spain announced that it had suspended operations at its mission in Sana'a.

The Italian Foreign Ministry issued a statement on February 13, saying the country's ambassador and embassy staff are returning home from the embassy in Yemen.

The ministry further expressed hope that through the mediation of the UN special envoy to Yemen, Jamal Benomar, security would be restored to Yemen in order to pave the way for the reopening of its embassy in Sana'a.



TOKYO (PRESS TV) – The Japanese minister of agriculture has resigned after he was accused of receiving illegal funds while in office, dealing a major blow to the newly formed cabinet of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Abe on Monday accepted a letter of resignation by Koya Nishikawa, who served as Japan's minister of agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

The resignation is regarded as a huge blow to Abe's much publicized overhaul plans for Japan's agriculture sector nearly one month before he submits his reform package to the Japanese parliament.

Abe (pictured above) quickly appointed former Farming Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi to the post. The prime minister said the parliament's time should not be wasted to examine the issue caused by what he said was Nishikawa's personal problems.

"Minister Nishikawa's intention is firm. As he said, parliamentary time, which should be used for policy deliberation, should not be wasted on his particular problems," Abe told a news conference, offering his apology to the people over the "wrong appointment" of Nishikawa.

Nishikawa has been hit by allegations of receiving funds from a group active in manufacturing sugar months after he granted the firm more than a billion yen in subsidies.

The issue of sugar is quite sensitive in Japan, as the country, along with United States, is engaged in intense talks with 10 other nations of the Trans-Pacific Partnership over the strategic staple.

The resigned minister is also accused of receiving similar donations in return for granting government subsidies to other companies.

ATHENS (Reuters) - Greece will present its economic reform plans on Monday to seal a euro zone financial lifeline, but the government drew criticism from a veteran leftist and ruling party member that the deal let voters down.

Germany, the biggest contributor to Greece's two bailouts totalling 240 billion euro, said any extra spending on Athens's list of reforms had to be offset by savings or higher taxes.

After a climbdown in Brussels to win the conditional four-month agreement, the government of Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras declared the reform list would at least be decided by Greeks, in contrast to the austerity policies dictated by foreign creditors since they bailed out Athens in 2010.

"The list will include a series of reforms that the Greek government will propose - and I underline that," said government spokesman Gabriel Sakellariadis. "Above all, they will be socially just reforms that aim to fight tax evasion, to fight corruption," he told Skai television.

PRETORIA (PRESS TV) – All 486 South African miners trapped after a fire outbreak at a gold mine have been brought to safety, a source says.

The miners were working about 2,300 meters underground at Harmony GoldMining Company's Kusaalethu mine near the town of Carletonville when the fire broke out on Sunday.

The missing miners have been found and rescued, said Charmane Russell, the spokeswoman for the Harmony Gold Mining Company.

The fire was thought to have been caused during maintenance work on a bulk air cooler at the mine.

Following the incident, a search and rescue mission rushed to pull the miners out, the company said in a statement.

South African President Jacob Zuma had called on the mining company to do everything possible for the rescue of the miners.

"I urge all South Africans to keep the miners in their thoughts and prayers during this difficult period," Zuma said before the miners were located.

Mine accidents are common in South Africa's ultra-deep gold mines. Three people died at the Kusaalethu mine in 2014.