

# Turkey Arms Daesh Via Aid Groups: Russia



Russian Ambassador to the United Nations (UN) Vitaly Churkin

TEHRAN (Press TV) - **Russia's envoy to the United Nations (UN) says he has submitted to the Security Council purported evidence of the illicit transfer of arms and military hardware by Turkey to Daesh terrorist group in Syria.**

"The main supplier of weapons and military equipment to ISIL fighters is Turkey, which is doing so through non-governmental organizations. Work in this area is overseen by the National Intelligence Organization of Turkey," Russian Ambassador

Vitaly Churkin wrote in a letter to the UNSC, RT report on Friday.

Churkin also said that the transfer of military supplies to the notorious terrorist group "mainly involves vehicles" that operated across Syria under the cover of "humanitarian aid convoys."

He identified in his letter a number of NGOs funded by Turkish and other foreign sources that shipped to Syria cargoes of various sorts, including military equipment, throughout the

past year.

"The Besar foundation is most actively engaged in pursuing these objectives and, in 2015, formed around 50 convoys to the Turkmen areas of Bayirbucak and Kiziltepe (260 kilometers north of the Syrian capital of Damascus)," the Russian envoy said. He also identified the Iyilikder Foundation and the Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms as other groups involved in the alleged operations.

According to Churkin, such deliveries are carried out through various checkpoints on the Turkish-Syrian border as well as waterways, specifically the Euphrates River.

The Russian military released a batch of purported evidence implicating Turkey in late 2015, including satellite images of columns of oil tanker trucks moving into Turkey from areas controlled by Daesh militants in Syria.

Ankara is widely believed to be the key conduit for armed militants slipping into Syria to join the foreign-backed militancy across Syria that seeks to topple the Damascus government.

## Azerbaijan Says 12 of Its Soldiers Killed in Fighting

BAKU, Azerbaijan (AP) — **Heavy fighting erupted Saturday between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces over the separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan said 12 of its soldiers were killed and claimed to have inflicted heavy casualties on the Armenian forces.**

The fighting was one of the worst outbreaks since the 1994 end of full-scale war over the region. Since 1994, mountainous Nagorno-Karabakh has been under the control of local ethnic Armenian forces and the Armenian military.

Armenian forces also occupy several areas outside Nagorno-Karabakh proper. The sides are separated by a demilitarized buffer zone, but small clashes have broken out frequently.

Each side blamed the other for Saturday's escalation.

In a statement, Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry said 12 of its soldiers "became shahids" — Muslim martyrs — and said one of its helicopters was shot down.

The statement also claimed that more than 100 Armenian forces were killed or wounded and that six tanks and 15 artillery

positions were destroyed.

Armenia in turn claimed to have inflicted heavy damage on Azerbaijani forces, but did not immediately give figures.

Nagorno-Karabakh, a region in Azerbaijan, has been under the control of local ethnic Armenian forces and the Armenian military since 1994.

David Babayan, a spokesman for Nagorno-Karabakh's separatist president, said a boy of about 12 was killed and two other children were wounded in a Grad missile barrage by Azerbaijani forces. He characterized the fighting as the worst since 1994.

Russian President Vladimir Putin urged all sides to cease firing and "show restraint," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov was quoted as saying by Russian news agencies. Russia's foreign and defense ministers contacted their Azerbaijani and Armenian counterparts in hopes of stabilizing the situation, the ministries said.

"The situation along the entire length of the line of opposition between Karabakhi and Azerbaijani armed forces continues to be extremely

difficult," Armenian defense ministry spokesman Artsrun Hovhannisyan told The Associated Press.

Years of negotiations under the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe have brought little progress in resolving the territorial dispute.

Armenian forces also occupy several areas outside Nagorno-Karabakh. The sides are separated by a demilitarized buffer zone, but both claim frequent violations by the other.

The Armenian Defense Ministry said Azerbaijan used aircraft, tanks and artillery to try to make inroads into Nagorno-Karabakh and that "Azerbaijani authorities bear all responsibility for the unprecedentedly supercharged situation."

The Azerbaijani Defense Ministry said the fighting began when Armenian forces fired mortars and large-caliber artillery shells across the front line. Ministry spokesman Vagif Dargyakhly told The Associated Press that more than 120 shots were fired, some of which hit civilian residential areas.

## Salah Abdeslam Refused to Blow Himself Up, Brother Says: BFM TV

PARIS (Reuters) - **Salah Abdeslam, the Paris attacks suspect who was arrested in Brussels last month, refused to blow himself up on the day of the attacks, his brother Mohamed told French news channel BFM TV.**

Abdeslam, who will be extradited to France, has renewed an offer to cooperate with French authorities

investigating the Nov. 13 attacks that killed 130 people, his lawyer said this week.

"There would have been more victims had I done it," Salah Abdeslam told his brother. "Luckily, I couldn't go through with it."

After his arrest in Brussels on March 18, Abdeslam answered

some investigators' questions but then exercised his right to silence following the suicide bombings in Brussels on March 22 that killed 32 people.

Investigators believe the attacks in Paris and Brussels were carried out by militants from the same Islamic State network.

## Obama, Xi Agree to Fully Implement North Korea Sanctions

Washington (AFP) - **US President Barack Obama and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping have agreed to fully implement sanctions against North Korea, in a meeting that was promptly followed by a provocative Pyongyang missile launch.**

The White House said Friday that Obama and Xi agreed to "narrow differences" between the world's two major powers during a meeting the day before.

"Both leaders committed... to strengthen coordination in addressing the shared threat presented by North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons and ballistic missile systems," the White House said.

"Both leaders affirmed their commitment to achieving the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2270."

In January, North Korea detonated a nuclear device and a month later launched a long-range rocket, prompting the United States, China and other UN partners to implement sanctions.

Washington's efforts to build pressure on North Korea has long been a point of friction with Beijing, which provides the hermit state an economic lifeline.

The White House believes that China could do more to press North Korea into abandoning its nuclear and missile programs.

China fears that too much pressure would topple the regime, prompting instability and regional upheaval.

As if to underscore the difficult of the issue, North Korea on Thursday appeared to fire another short-range missile off its east coast.

South Korea's defense ministry said a surface-to-air missile was fired at around 12:45 pm (0345 GMT) from the eastern city of Sondok. The range and precise trajectory could not immediately be confirmed, a ministry official said.

The launch came in the middle of the two-day nuclear security summit being hosted by Obama in Washington, at which North Korea has been the focus of the US president's talks with the leaders of

China, South Korea and Japan.

The summit opened Thursday with Obama trying to forge consensus among East Asian leaders on how to respond to Pyongyang's recent nuclear and missile tests, which have seen an escalation of tensions in the region.

"We are united in our efforts to deter and defend against North Korean provocations," Obama said after meeting Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and South Korean President Park Geun-Hye.

The leaders also discussed the deployment of the sophisticated missile system THAAD -- the Theater High Altitude Area Defense System -- to South Korea.

But the move has raised concerns in Beijing, which is unhappy at the prospect of the US hardware on its doorstep, fearing it will further tip the balance of power in the Pacific towards Washington.

"It in no way threatens either Chinese or Russian or other security interests in the region and will do nothing to undermine strategic stability between the United States and China," insisted Dan Kritenbrink, Obama's top Asia adviser.

During Obama and Xi's meeting Thursday, the White House said the two countries had agreed to sign the Paris Climate Accord and work toward a "global market-based measure for addressing greenhouse gas emissions from international aviation."

Obama and Xi have tried to use agreement on environmental issues as a ballast to stabilize relations beset by disputes over hacking of US government sites, the South China Sea and piracy.

"Both leaders reaffirmed the cyber commitments announced during President Xi's September 2015 State Visit and agreed to ensure their full implementation," said the White House.

"The President reiterated that we will continue to monitor whether Chinese actions demonstrate their adherence to the commitments."

There appeared to be less common ground over Beijing's alleged military buildup in the South China Sea.

## DPRK Tests New-type AA Guided Weapon System

PYONGYANG (KCNA) - **The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) successfully tested a fire of new-type anti-air guided weapon system, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported on Saturday.**

Kim Jong Un, supreme leader of the DPRK observed the test.

The test verified that the feasibility of the new-type AA guided weapon sys-

tem is perfect in the light of the latest military sci-tech requirements.

Kim Jong Un expressed great satisfaction over the successful test, terming the success another striking demonstration of the validity of policy of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) attaching importance to science and technology of national defence and the rapidly growing defence capability of the DPRK.

## UN Security Council Approves Burundi Police Force

LONDON (BBC) -**The UN Security Council has approved a resolution paving the way for a UN police force to be deployed in Burundi.**

The resolution, drafted by France, calls on UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon to draw up a list of options for the proposed presence within 15 days.

Burundi has been in turmoil since April last year, when President Pierre Nkurunziza sought and won a third term that the opposition said was illegal.

Since then more than 400 people have

been killed.

There is concern the violence could grow into ethnic conflict in the region.

In January, the UN said it found evidence that Burundi's security forces gang-raped women while searching the homes of suspected opposition leaders and heard testimony of mass graves.

Mr Ban will have to consult the Burundian government about the proposed force but President Nkurunziza has expressed opposition to an intervention by the UN or the African Union.



BRUSSELS (AP) — **The Latest on attacks in Brussels and Paris (all times local):**

A Belgian Federal Police spokesman says reinforced security measures will be in effect when limited passenger service goes into effect Sunday at Brussels Airport.

The airport has been closed since the March 22 suicide bombings that killed 16 victims at the airport and another 16 in the Brussels subway.

Police spokesman Michael Jonniaux says Saturday that the new security measures will include spot checks of vehicles arriving at the airport, and new controls on people and baggage before they are allowed to enter the airport terminal.

He says both people and baggage will be scanned before they can go into the building. He also says travelers' IDs and travel documents will also be checked to make sure they match.

IDOMENI, Greece (AP) — **The Latest on the migrant and refugee influx in Europe (all times local):**

Austria's defense minister says his country will deploy soldiers at a key Alpine pass to stop migrants arriving from Italy.

Hans Peter Doskozil told German daily Die Welt that the move anticipates a shift in migrant flows from the Turkey-Greece route to the central Mediterranean.

In an interview published Saturday, the newspaper quotes Doskozil saying that the military can provide "considerable support to border security" at the Brenner pass.

He also proposed that the European Union should deploy a civilian-military mission to support the bloc's border agency Frontex.

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — **Hundreds of protesters marched in Haiti's capital on Friday to demand justice following the brutal killings of three deaf women who were tortured, stoned and left in a gully by attackers.**

Mickelson Jean, leader of a Haitian association for the deaf, was one of roughly 300 people who marched in Port-au-Prince to call attention to the recent slayings. The women lived in the coastal village of Leveque where scores of homes are reserved for deaf people and their families.

"These murders are an act of absolute barbarism and we must have justice," Jean said.

The three women were killed as they were trying to return home by foot late at night because a bridge had collapsed, preventing public transport from Haiti's capital. They all worked as street vendors and went into Port-au-Prince that day to stock up on supplies.

TRIPOLI (Dispatches) - **Ten Libyan cities controlled by a self-declared authority in Tripoli have pledged their support to the UN-backed unity government of the country, which has moved into the capital.**

The announcement was made in a statement published on Thursday on the official Facebook page of the municipality of the northwestern city of Sabratha.

It came following a meeting between representatives from the 10 coastal cities located between Tripoli and the border with Tunisia.

The statement welcomed the arrival of the members of Libya's UN-backed government to Tripoli and urged all Libyan citizens to "support the national unity government."

It further called on Libya's internationally-recognized administration to "put an immediate end to all armed conflicts across Libya."