

TEHRAN (Dispatches) — A fire that broke out at a paper mill has injured 31 workers in southern Iran, state TV reported on Saturday.

Eleven workers were taken to local hospitals and 20 received on-site treatment as their injuries were not severe. The report said firefighters are still trying to put out the fire in the town of Khorramabad. It did not elaborate on the cause of the fire. On Wednesday a fire at a bitumen storage facility in southern Iran killed three workers and injured two others.

TEHRAN (Press TV) -- Iran on Saturday condemned a deadly terrorist attack in Kabul, reiterating the importance of making joint efforts to counter the ominous phenomenon of terrorism.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has always stressed the need for a constant fight against terrorism in all its forms and has shown its firm determination in this regard," Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qasemi said. He said genuine, joint efforts by regional countries were the only way to fight the scourge of terrorism.

Viewpoint

By: S. Nawabzadeh

Fiction of the Holocaust Has Robbed Minds in the West of Realities

Webometrics Includes Iranian Universities in Its Ranking



Iran Shine in World Taekwondo Grand Slam Event



Yemeni Army Attacks Saudi-Backed Militants



Ayatollah Khamenei: Students Should Prepare for Current Developments

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Saturday urged Muslim university students in Europe to understand the developments and expectations of the current era and prepare themselves for them.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in a message to the 52nd meeting of the Union of Islamic Students' Associations in Europe.

"The current era and its developments define certain expectations for young individuals, which did not exist or were not known in previous times," the Leader said.

"Young university students should, thoroughly, understand these developments and the corresponding expectations, and thus prepare themselves," he added.

The Leader emphasized that Islamic associations and their religious atmosphere could assist the young in preparing

themselves.

"The main point is that you work for the sake of God, enthusiastically, fulfilling your duties," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

"If you accomplish the blessed opportunity (to do so), Divine Guidance will also come to your aid, God willing," the Leader added.

In his message to the 51st meeting of the Union of Islamic Students' Associations in Europe last January, Ayatollah Khamenei urged Muslim students in Europe to make an impact on their surroundings and promote Islam.

"You have no excuses. What is expected from you, dear ones, is something more than scientific, religious, and ethical self-improvement," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

This is the duty of all Muslims in the "asymmetric war" of the arrogant powers against Ayatollah Khamenei added.

Nearly 100 People Killed in Bombing: Massacre in Kabul



A man reacts after hearing his son was killed during a car bomb attack in Kabul, January 27, 2018.

KABUL (Dispatches) -- A bomb hidden in an ambulance killed at least 95 people and wounded about 158 in the Afghan capital Kabul on Saturday when it blew up at a police checkpoint in a busy part of the city that was crowded with pedestrians at the time of the attack.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the suicide blast, a week after they claimed an attack on the Intercontinental Hotel in which more than 20

people were killed.

An interior ministry spokesman blamed the Haqqani network, a militant group affiliated with the Taliban which Afghan and Western officials consider to be behind many of the biggest attacks on urban targets in Afghanistan.

As medical teams struggled to handle the casualties pouring in, some of the wounded were laid out in the open, with intravenous drips set up next to them in hospital gardens.

"It's a massacre," said Dejan Panic, coordinator in Afghanistan for the Italian aid group Emergency, which runs a nearby trauma hospital that treated dozens of wounded.

Hours after the blast, a health ministry spokesman said the casualty toll had risen to at least 95 killed and 158 wounded.

The latest attack will add pressure on President Ashraf Ghani and his U.S. allies, who have expressed growing confidence that a new more aggressive

military strategy has succeeded in driving Taliban insurgents back from major provincial centers.

"Today's attack is nothing short of an atrocity, and those who have organized and enabled it must be brought to justice and held to account," Tadamichi Yamamoto, head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, said in a statement.

The United States has stepped up its airstrikes, aiming to break a stalemate and force the insurgents to the negotiating table.

However, the Taliban have dismissed suggestions they have been weakened by the new strategy, and the past week has shown their capacity to mount deadly, high-profile attacks is undiminished, even in the heavily protected centre of Kabul.

Saturday is a working day in Afghanistan and the streets were full when the blast went off at around lunchtime in a busy part of the city close to shops and markets and near a number of foreign embassies and government buildings.

Mirwais Yasini, a member of parliament who was nearby when the explosion occurred,

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Tillerson Meets European Counterparts on Iran

WARSAW (Dispatches) -- American, British, French and German officials met this week to begin formal discussions on addressing U.S. concerns about the Iran nuclear deal, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Saturday.

"President Trump's been quite clear on his view that that agreement had a number of flaws and he intends to have those flaws addressed," Tillerson said.

"What we have agreed to do is work with our European counterparts...and ultimately the EU to identify what areas we believe have to be addressed and the mechanism by which we can address those."

Tillerson earlier this week said working groups would meet as early as next week to discuss the deal, but a person briefed on the meeting said Brian Hook, Tillerson's close aide and the State Department's policy planning director, met with European officials to begin the formal talks in London while Tillerson was in Davos, Switzerland, for the World Economic Forum.

The U.S. chief diplomat said Washington envisions an effort in which Iranian officials will

ultimately take part. Iranian officials have said they won't participate in any efforts to change the 2015 landmark accord, in which Iran agreed to curb its nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief.

"Working groups have already begun meeting on the effort to agree principles, what is the scope of what we will intend to address and also how might we engage the Iranians on discussions to address these issues," Tillerson said Saturday in Warsaw, after a meeting with Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki and Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz.

Before departing for Washington, Tillerson also met with Law and Justice Party Leader Jarloslaw Kaczynski. Kaczynski holds an ordinary seat in Parliament but as head of the Law and Justice party, he is widely considered Poland's behind-the-scenes ruler.

On Iran, Tillerson said the Trump administration's Iran policy was broader than addressing its concerns with the nuclear accord.

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Turkey: U.S. Promised to Halt Aid to Kurdish Militants

ANKARA/BEIRUT (Dispatches) -- The United States has pledged to stop supplying weapons to a Kurdish militia in Syria, Turkey said Saturday, calling on Washington to immediately remove its troops from a Syrian town of Manbij that Turkish forces plan to target.

Turkey's air and ground offensive in northwest Syria's Afrin region against the Kurdish YPG militia has opened a new front in the seven-year, multi-sided war and strained ties with NATO ally Washington.

Ankara views the YPG as terrorists and as an extension of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and has been infuriated by U.S. support, including arms and training, for the militia.

Since the start of the eight-day-old incursion, dubbed "Operation Olive Branch" by Ankara, President Tayyip Erdogan has said Turkish forces would push east towards the town of Manbij, potentially putting them in confrontation with U.S. troops deployed there.

U.S. National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster told Erdogan's spokesman, Ibrahim Kalin, in a telephone call that the United States would no longer provide weapons to the YPG, the Turkish presidency said Saturday.

"It was emphasized that Turkey's legitimate security concerns must be paid attention to. It was agreed that close

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U.S. Chopper Attacks Civilians in Iraq, Kills 8

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) -- A U.S. military helicopter targeted several vehicles in Iraq's al-Anbar Province on Saturday, killing eight civilians and wounding 11 others, including a local official.

The attack occurred in the west of Ramadi, the provincial capital of Anbar, local Iraqi media reported.

Iraqi Alsumaria television cited an unnamed security official as saying that the U.S. helicopter gunship targeted several civilian vehicles in the al-Baghdadi neighborhood of Ramadi.

Alsumaria said the head of the al-Baghdadi township and its police chief were among the wounded and were in serious condition.

It was not clear why the attack occurred. There was no immediate comment from the U.S. military.

The U.S. has been leading a coalition of its allies in a military campaign against purported Daesh targets in Iraq. While the Iraqi leadership officially announced the end of operations against Daesh in December last year, pockets of the terrorist group reportedly remain operative in rural areas in the country.

Daesh had overrun territory in Iraq and neighboring Syria in offensives that started in 2014.

The Takfiri terrorist group brutalized local populations in the territories it used to hold.

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