

UK on High Alert After Seven Killed in London



London is on high alert following two terrorist incidents Saturday night, which police say killed at least seven people.

LONDON (Dispatches) -- The death toll from a terror attack at the heart of London rose to seven Sunday as Prime Minister Theresa May convened an emergency security cabinet session to deal with the crisis.

The assault began Saturday night when a van veered off the road and barreled into pedestrians on busy London Bridge. Three men fled the van with large knives and attacked people at bars and restaurants in nearby Borough Market, police and witnesses said. The attack unfolded quickly, and police said officers had shot

and killed the three attackers within eight minutes.

The violence turned a summery night in an area packed with revelers into a scene of panic and chaos, with officers running through crowded streets screaming for people to flee. Lifeboats on the River Thames helped evacuate the area, which is popular with tourists. It remained closed off Sunday and police urged residents and tourists to stay away.

Emergency officials said 48 people were treated at London hospitals and a number of others suffered less serious injuries.

The Metropolitan Police force declared the attacks "terrorist incidents," but there was no immediate claim of responsibility.

Britain was already on edge after a bombing two weeks ago at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester, in northwest England, that killed 22 people and injured dozens of others. Grande and other stars are scheduled to perform a benefit concert for victims Sunday night.

The latest attacks came just days before Thursday's general election. May's Conservative Party had been expected to win by a wide margin but recent polls have showed the race tightening. Major parties temporarily suspended national campaigning Sunday.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan said the attackers hoped to disrupt democracy and hamper plans for voting, but that would not happen. He said Londoners should remain vigilant.

Assistant Metropolitan Police Commissioner Mark Rowley said that while police believe all the attackers were killed, the investigation continued.

"We believe three people were involved, but we still have got some more inquiries to do to be 100 percent confident in that," he said.

Khan said some of the injured were in critical condition. French President Emmanuel Macron said French citizens were among the wounded.

It was the third attack to hit Britain in as many months.

Putin: Claims of Role in U.S. Elections 'Nonsense'



In this June 3, 2017 photo, Russian President Vladimir Putin faces an interview with NBC's "Sunday Night with Megyn Kelly" in St. Petersburg, Russia.

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Russian President Vladimir Putin says claims about Russian involvement in U.S. elections are untrue, and says the United States actively interferes with elections in other countries.

And he is dismissing as "a load of nonsense" the idea that Russia has damaging information on President Donald Trump.

"I never met with him. We have a lot of Americans who visit us," Putin said in an interview with NBC's "Sunday Night with Megyn Kelly." He added: "Do you think we're gathering compromising information on all of them right now or something? Are you all - have you all lost your senses over there?"

U.S. intelligence agencies have concluded that Russia meddled in the presidential election to hurt the bid of Democrat Hillary Clinton. Trump himself has been dogged by questions about any business dealings with Russia - he says he has none - as well as reports of a Russian dossier of damaging personal information.

"Well, this is just another load of nonsense," Putin said. "Where would we get this information from? Why, did we have some special relationship with him? We didn't have any relationship at all."

Putin again denied any Russian involvement in the U.S. presidential election and any knowledge of Russian contacts with the Trump campaign.

A special counsel appointed by the Justice Department and congressional committees are investigating.

Former FBI Director James Comey, whom Trump fired after allegedly asking him to drop an investigation into former national security adviser Michael Flynn and his Russian contacts, is scheduled to testify Thursday before the Senate's intelligence committee.

In the NBC interview, Putin was asked about reports of Trump adviser and son-in-law Jared Kushner's attempt to set up a secret communications channel with Russia. Putin said he knew nothing about it and that he had not discussed with Ambassador Sergey Kislyak any meeting with Kushner.

"Had there been anything significant he would have reported it to the minister. The minister would have reported it to me," Putin said. "There weren't even any reports. There's nothing to even talk about. There wasn't even any kind of specific discussion about sanctions or anything else. For me, this is just amazing. You created a sensation out of nothing."

Putin suggested that skilled hackers anywhere, including the U.S., could shift the blame for hacking onto Russia. He also alleged that the U.S. actively interferes with electoral campaigns of other countries.

"Put your finger anywhere on a map of the world, and everywhere you will hear complaints that American officials are interfering in internal electoral processes," he said.

As far as the findings of U.S. intelligence agencies, Putin said, "They have been misled."

North Korea Rejects New UN Sanctions

SEOUL (Dispatches) -- North Korea "fully rejects" the latest UN sanctions against its citizens and entities as a "hostile act" and will continue its nuclear weapons development without a delay, its foreign ministry spokesman said on Sunday.

The UN Security Council on Friday expanded targeted sanctions against North Korea after its repeated missile tests, adopting the first such resolution agreed by the United States and China since U.S. President Donald Trump took office.

The sanctions resolution "is a crafty hostile act with the purpose of putting a curb on the DPRK's buildup of nuclear forces, disarming it and causing economic suffocation to it," the foreign ministry

spokesman said in a statement carried by its official KCNA news agency. DPRK is short for Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the North's official name.

"Whatever sanctions and pressure may follow, we will not flinch from the road to build up nuclear forces which was chosen to defend the sovereignty of the country and the rights to national existence and will move forward towards the final victory," the spokesman said.

North Korea has rejected all UN Security Council resolutions dating back to 2006 when it conducted its first nuclear test, saying such moves directly infringe its sovereign right to self-defense.

The United States has struggled to slow North Korea's nuclear and missile programs, which have become a security

priority given Pyongyang's vow to develop a nuclear-tipped missile capable of hitting the U.S. mainland.

The Trump administration has been pressing China aggressively to rein in its neighbor, warning that all options are on the table if Pyongyang persists with its nuclear and missile development.

North Korea blamed the United States and China for "railroading and enforcing" the sanctions resolution at the UN Security Council "after having drafted it in the backroom at their own pleasure."

"It is a fatal miscalculation if the countries ... would even think that they can delay or hold in check the eye-opening development of the (North's) nuclear forces even for a moment," the spokesman said.

Zionist PM's Visit Overshadows ECOWAS Summit



Moroccan King Muhammad VI boycotted Africa ECOWAS summit because the Zionist premier was among those attending.

ROBERTSFIELD, Liberia (Dispatches) -- Morocco's king skipped a regional meeting of West African leaders amid his country's bid to join the bloc known as ECOWAS.

King Muhammad VI canceled his trip to the Sunday gathering because the occupying regime of Israel's PM Benjamin Netanyahu was among those attending. Morocco is one of the Arab League countries with no diplomatic ties with the Zionist regime.

Morocco is looking to increase investment and business ties in West Africa.

Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who hosted the summit Sunday, is stepping down from the presidency after serving two terms. She will be replaced as ECOWAS chair by the leader of Togo.

Netanyahu was invited to address the ECOWAS meeting, the first time a non-African leader has been asked to speak to the event.

"Over the last few days, key ECOWAS member states have decided to reduce their level of representation at the summit due to their disagreement with the invitation

handed to the Israeli prime minister. Other member states also expressed their astonishment at this invitation," Morocco's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Prior to his departure, Netanyahu wrote on his Facebook page that his "visit to Liberia is another chapter in the attempt to break the automatic anti-Israel majority in the United Nations."

More importantly, however, Israel is trying to cash in on Africa's arms market which has been absorbing Israeli weapons in recent years.

The visit was Netanyahu's second to Africa in a year. Last July, he traveled to four countries of Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda and Ethiopia, the first visit by an Israeli prime minister to sub-Saharan Africa in 29 years.

With insurgencies and Takfiri militancy growing across Africa, including Qaeda-affiliated Shabab and Daesh-linked Boko Haram, Zionist leaders are looking to sell advanced military equipment to the continent, the New York Times wrote on the eve of Netanyahu's visit last year.

No German Visit to Incirlik Airbase: Turkey



This file photo taken on July 28, 2015 shows a military aircraft on the runway at Incirlik Air Base, on the outskirts of the city of Adana, southeastern Turkey.

ANKARA (Dispatches) -- Turkey will maintain a ban on visits by German politicians to a key airbase used for raids in Syria, the foreign minister said Monday.

The Incirlik base in southern Turkey has been at the center of a dispute between the NATO allies since Ankara blocked a visit last month by German parliamentarians.

"Right now it is possible to visit the NATO base in Konya (in central Turkey), not Incirlik," Mevlut Cavusoglu said at a news conference with his German counterpart Sigmar Gabriel in Ankara.

Germany has 250 military personnel stationed at Incirlik flying Tornado surveillance missions over Syria and refueling flights for partner nations.

At the height of the row, Germany warned it could move the personnel to another location in the region, most likely Jordan.

Gabriel said that he regretted the Turkish decision, adding that Ankara must understand "for domestic political reasons we will then need to transfer our soldiers."

But he added there was not yet any decision or a concrete plan for the relocation of the German troops from Incirlik.

Turkey justified preventing the German parliamentary group from visiting the base by accusing Berlin of having offered political asylum to Turkish nationals who took part in the July 2016 attempted coup.

Cavusoglu said Monday that Turkey had no problem with Germany, which is a major trade partner, adding: "If Germany takes one step forward toward us, we will always take two steps further."

But he said that some facts could not be ignored, adding that more than 400 Turkish diplomatic or official passport holders had sought asylum in Germany.

"We would not like to see members of FETO take shelter in friendly country Germany," he said, referring to a movement led by U.S.-based preacher Fethullah Gulen, blamed by Ankara for orchestrating the failed coup.

Cavusoglu hinted that visits to Incirlik could be possible in the future if joint steps were taken, without elaborating. "Conditions are not ripe right now to visit Incirlik," he said.

Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim cancelled a planned meeting with Gabriel because of scheduling reasons, an official from the Turkish premier's office said.



SRINIGAR, India (AFP) -- Indian paramilitary forces killed four suspected suicide attackers who tried to storm their camp in the disputed Kashmir region early Monday.

The gunmen lobbed grenades and fired automatic weapons outside the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) camp in Indian-administered Kashmir before dawn, a spokesman said. "They tried to storm the camp but they were not even allowed to enter the gate," CRPF spokesman Bhuvesh Choudhary told AFP.

Maiduguri, Nigeria (AFP) -- Torrential rains and wind destroyed 1,000 makeshift homes in northeast Nigeria over the weekend, aggravating conditions for the thousands of people displaced by Boko Haram violence, the United Nations said.

At least 4,300 people have been affected by violent storms that swept the state of Borno, the heart of the eight-year Takfiri insurrection, said the International Organization for Migration (IOM) after assessing conditions in 44 camps for displaced people in the state. "Rains are just beginning and they will last for 3 or 4 months," Henry Kwenin, an emergency coordinator for the IOM told AFP.

BUDVA, Montenegro (AP) -- Once the Balkan stronghold of pro-Russian sentiments, tiny Montenegro was on Monday silently celebrating its entry into NATO in a historic turn that has made the Kremlin furious.

Despite the Russian anger and a deep split within the nation of some 620,000 people over the issue, Montenegro formally became the 29th member of the Western military alliance at a ceremony in Washington on Monday. Russia has threatened economic and political retaliation, including a campaign to undermine the Montenegrin tourism industry, which relies heavily on Russian visitors.

NICOSIA (Reuters) -- Peace talks on divided Cyprus are to resume in Geneva this month, the United Nations said Monday, ending a stalemate on procedure which had threatened to derail two years of negotiations.

Talks between Greek Cypriot leader Nicos Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci had stalled last month in disagreement over the modalities of a conference in Geneva including Britain, Turkey and Greece and which would address security issues on a post-settlement Cyprus. "The leaders and the Secretary-General agreed on the need to reconvene the Conference on Cyprus in June," a statement from the office of United Nations chief Antonio Guterres said.

SYDNEY (Dispatches) -- Top U.S. and Australian officials warned Monday that battle-hardened and angry foreign fighters may return to Southeast Asia from the Middle East and take up arms in their own countries.

The warning follows the weekend terror attacks in London, which were claimed by Daesh, and comes amid a growing extremist threat in the Philippines. Daesh fighters will "come back with battlefield skills, they'll come back with hardened ideology, they'll come back angry, frustrated, and we need to be very aware of that," Australian Defense Minister Marise Payne said.