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Libyan Warlord Haftar Visits Ankara in First Trip to Turkey

ANKARA (Dispatches) -- Libyan warlord Khalifa Haftar visited Ankara on Thursday at President Erdogan's invitation—his first trip to Turkey, marking a warming of ties after Ankara backed Tripoli against him in the 2019 war.

Accompanied by his sons Khaled and Belqasim, Haftar is expected to meet Erdogan and defense officials, as Ankara seeks to broker a deal between Benghazi and Tripoli.

Thought for Today

One who repents for his thoughts and deeds will not be refused acceptance of the repentance.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

Hamas Weighs Response After Israel Intensifies Killings, Assassinations in Gaza



Mourners carry the bodies of Muhammad Abu al-Aouf, a Hamas internal security officer, and his family, assassinated in an Israeli strike during their funeral in Gaza City on Wednesday.

GAZA CITY (Dispatches) -- **Israeli attacks across the Gaza Strip killed at least one Palestinian on Friday and a further nine on Thursday, including a Hamas-appointed deputy education minister and his wife.**

According to the Palestinian ministry of health, a Palestinian man died on Friday morning from wounds sustained in an Israeli drone strike targeting civilians in Jabalia, northern Gaza, with several others injured in the attack.

In Gaza City, an Israeli strike hit a residential apartment in the Al-Hasayna building in the western Al-Rimal neighborhood, injuring three Palestinians including women and children. Two people were also wounded, one seriously, in an Israeli drone strike near the British Hospital in the Al-Mawasi area of Khan Younis.

On Thursday, at least nine Palestinians were killed in Israeli strikes, according to medical sources.

The deadliest incident was an Israeli airstrike on an apartment in Deir al-Balah in central Gaza, which killed Khaled Abu Nada, identified by Gaza authorities as deputy minister of education and a member of Hamas's Political Bureau, along with his wife Abeer Mohammed Abu Nada.

In a separate strike, three Palestinians were killed in the Al-Shati refugee camp west of Gaza City. A 62-year-old man, Walid Abu Saeed, was also killed by Israeli fire east of the Al-Bureij refugee camp.

The Palestinian Ministry of Health said Thursday that 19 Palestinians had been killed and 48 wounded across Gaza over the preceding 48 hours, bringing the death toll since the ceasefire took effect on October 11, 2025, to 1,705, with 6,163 wounded. The cumulative death toll since October 2023 stands at 74,772, with 176,298 injured.

Hamas condemned the targeting of Abu Nada as a "heinous crime" and a violation of the ceasefire agreement and international law.

The strikes came as Israeli war minister Israel Katz threatened to forcibly displace one million Palestinians southward and to assassinate Hamas political bureau chief Khalil al-Hayya, who responded that Hamas was consulting with Palestinian factions on how to respond to Israeli violations.

Hayya said "the equation of killing and blockade cannot be accepted under the agreement," and that Hamas would consult other Palestinian factions on how to respond to the violations.

He held the U.S.-backed Board of Peace politically and morally responsible for failing to halt the attacks, saying "a policy of silence regarding the occupation's crimes is unacceptable."

Thousands of Kurds Protest as Iraq's Zaidi Seizes Oilfields, Border Crossings

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) -- **Thousands of Kurds protested across northern Iraq on Thursday against Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi's order to seize oil fields and border crossings from Kurdish authorities, as federal forces closed two crossings and Iraq's top court backed the central government's authority.**

The demonstrations in Erbil, Duhok, Zakho and other cities marked the most serious confrontation between Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government in years, drawing a rare joint condemnation from the region's two ruling parties and exposing the fragility of Zaidi's six-month-old government.

Zaidi, a 41-year-old businessman and political novice backed by U.S. President Donald Trump, ordered the federal oil ministry on Tuesday to manage oilfields in Kirkuk, Nineveh, Diyala and Salahuddin provinces that Kurdish security forces have controlled, and directed the border ports authority to take over all crossings in the Kurdistan Region.

He also barred the KRG from exporting crude without federal approval, citing an investigation into oil smuggling involving the state-owned North Oil Company.

On Wednesday, Iraq's Federal Supreme Court ruled that federal authorities may deploy troops along all international borders, "including the borders located within the territories administered by the Kurdistan Region," and affirmed federal oversight of oil and gas fields.

The ruling appeared to hand Zaidi a legal victory, but political analysts say implementation against entrenched Kurdish interests will prove far more difficult.

On Thursday, Iraq's border forces commander Muhammad al-Saidi told state media that federal forces had closed the al-Waleed crossing with Syria and the Bashta crossing with Iran, both previously run by the KRG.

In Erbil, a banner carried by protesters read: "Kurdistan Region will not submit to an unconstitutional decision or to the imposition of the will of any person or party".

Kenjo Khalaf, a university student at the Duhok protest, told Reuters: "We do not accept an attack on Kurdistan's land and will not allow anyone to interfere in our land."

The KRG's cabinet said Zaidi's order "violates both the Constitution and the constitutional rights of the Kurdistan Region" and represents "an attempt to return Iraq to a centralized regime".

Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani said he "categorically rejects addressing the Kurdistan Region with military language". The Kurdistan Democratic Party and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan issued a joint statement declaring any attempt to undermine the region's political entity a "red line".

Three Kurdish opposition parties met with Zaidi in Baghdad on Thursday and presented a proposal to resolve the dispute through talks, according to Rudaw.

The confrontation echoes 2017, when Baghdad sent tanks into Kirkuk after the Kurdistan Region held an independence referendum.

Oil has been at the center of the dispute: Baghdad suspended budget transfers to Erbil in 2014, and a 2022 Federal Supreme Court ruling declared the KRG's oil and gas law unconstitutional.

Iraq's four presidencies have approved a national dialogue proposed for Dec. 1 under judicial supervision to address the constitutional crisis.

Syria's Alawite Protests Met With Gunfire as Christians Report State Takfirization

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – **Syria's Alawite protesters reported live fire from security forces and a senior cleric accusing the regime of Abu Muhammad al-Jolani of dismantling the country's religious pluralism.**

The developments underscore the precarious position of minority communities nearly two years after Jolani's Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) consolidated power in Damascus.

Jolani, a former Al-Qaeda commander and one-time deputy to Daesh's leadership in Iraq, has sought to rebrand as a moderate state-builder while his security apparatus faces mounting accusations of sectarian exclusion.

On Thursday, Alawite activists said HTS-linked forces opened fire on peaceful demonstrations in coastal cities including Latakia and Tartous, where crowds had gathered to denounce recent attacks on their community.

The incidents followed a pattern of escalating violence against the minority that has intensified since spring, when hundreds of Alawite civilians were killed in coordinated massacres across the coastal heartland.

The same day, Syriac Catholic Archbishop Jacques Mourad of Homs went public with detailed allegations of state-driven takfirization.

Speaking at a conference in Munich, Mourad said non-Sunni citizens were being purged from public administration. He described experienced officials from Alawite, Christian and even Sunni backgrounds being dismissed without qualified replacements.

Mourad's warnings echoed a joint statement issued last week by the patriarchs of three major Christian churches, who condemned what they called "a series of heinous and recurring attacks" targeting Christians.

The statement cited the November 14 assault on Melkite Archbishop Youhanna Abdo Arbash, who was bound, blindfolded and robbed by gunmen at his Homs residence, as well as the kidnapping and apparent torture of a Christian jeweler held for a ransom of 120 kilograms of gold.

Syria's Christian population has collapsed from roughly one million before the 2011 war to fewer than 300,000, according to expert estimates. Church leaders have accused authorities of failing to provide protection, warning that the community's future in the country is now in grave question.

The violence comes as Jolani's regime confronts a separate threat from Daesh, the takfiri organization from which HTS splintered more than a decade ago.

On Wednesday, a Daesh cell attacked an internal security facility in Hasakah, killing two officers. The group has declared a new campaign against Jolani's administration, exploiting ideological rifts that date to 2013, when Jolani refused to subordinate his forces to Daesh's command.

Turkey Detains Former Halk TV Anchors in Widening Media Probe

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) – **Turkish authorities detained two former Halk TV anchors and issued an arrest warrant for the broadcaster's news coordinator, prosecutors said on Friday, in a move opposition figures and press freedom groups described as an assault on independent journalism.**

The Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office said nine people were taken into custody, including former anchors Ece Uner and Deniz Bayramoglu. Prosecutors accused the pair of producing "false reports" in exchange for payment, and listed charges including money laundering, disseminating misleading information, bid rigging and corruption.

An arrest warrant was issued for Halk TV news coordinator Kursad Oguz, who prosecutors said was abroad.

The detentions mark at least the third wave of a probe into Halk TV, which authorities seized in October when a government trustee was appointed to run the broadcaster. Police arrested 11 people during that raid, and prosecutors issued an arrest warrant for Halk TV chief executive Cafer Mahiroglu, who lives in London.

Authorities allege the channel was financed through bribery, rigged municipal tenders and fictitious invoices, and claim Uner and Bayramoglu received undeclared monthly payments of 1.65 million lira in exchange for reports produced at the direction of the channel's ownership.

The government denies targeting journalists and says the judiciary acts independently. But the opposition and journalist organizations condemned Friday's detentions as politically motivated.

The Turkish Journalists' Association said journalism cannot be practised under conditions of access bans, broadcast suspensions, detentions and arrests. Turkey ranked 163rd out of 180 countries in Reporters Without Borders' 2026 World Press Freedom Index.

Authorities also took control of another opposition broadcaster, Sozcu TV, earlier this month, extending a crackdown that has seen trustees appointed to multiple critical news outlets in recent years. Critics say the moves have narrowed the space for independent media ahead of future elections.

Halk TV, one of Turkey's most-watched opposition channels, has frequently aired programming critical of President Tayyip Erdogan's government. The broadcaster did not immediately comment on Friday's detentions. Lawyers for Uner and Bayramoglu could not be reached.

The detentions drew swift reaction from opposition parties, which called on the government to respect press freedom and release the journalists. The case is expected to further strain relations between Ankara and Western allies, which have repeatedly raised concerns about Turkey's media landscape and judicial independence.

Israeli Raids, Strikes, Invasions Hit West Bank, Lebanon and Syria

BEIRUT (Dispatches) -- **Israeli forces and settlers escalated atrocities across the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria on Thursday and Friday, conducting mass kidnaps and settler attacks in the West Bank, airstrikes on Lebanon, and ground invasions and detonations in southern Syria.**

Israeli forces conducted raids across multiple West Bank areas on Thursday and Friday, abducting at least 27 people and injuring one with a rubber bullet during a raid on Qalandia refugee camp.

The kidnappings were concentrated in Nablus (7 people), Baytlahm (4 people), and Jenin (3 people), with soldiers reportedly vandalizing furniture in the raided homes.

In the Salfit area, bulldozers demolished a house and retaining wall in the town of Kafr ad-Dik, citing "lack of building permits," and fired tear gas at residents who attempted to stop the demolition.

Settler violence also occurred: in Beita, south of Nablus, settlers set fire to a Palestinian vehicle, completely destroying it. In the Yatta area south of Al-Khalil, armed settlers attacked farmers while they were plowing, beat them, and then Israeli forces arrived and arrested three of the attacked farmers.

On Thursday evening, the Israeli military stated it had conducted airstrikes on the Ein al-Tina area of the Bekaa Valley in eastern Lebanon.

Lebanese state media reported that earlier on Thursday, Israeli warplanes destroyed a building in the southern town of Haris and struck Kfar Tebnit, while Israeli artillery shelled multiple areas in southern Lebanon.

These attacks occurred despite the disgraceful U.S.-brokered ceasefire agreement reached on June 26, which obliges Israel to nothing in its continuing invasion of Lebanon.

According to Al Jazeera and Anadolu Agency, Israeli forces entered the Tel Ahmar area near the village of Ain al-Nuriya in the northern Quneitra countryside of southern Syria with approximately 12 military vehicles on Wednesday evening, and detonated an abandoned military barracks after midnight (i.e., early Thursday morning), with the explosion heard in both Quneitra and Dara'a provinces.

Israeli forces also detonated a minefield west of Al-Rafid within the buffer zone adjacent to the occupied Golan Heights. Additionally, Israeli forces used heavy machine guns to fire on agricultural land in the village of Abidin in western Daraa province.

These atrocities constitute violations of the 1974 Disengagement Agreement, and UN forces have repeatedly stated that Israeli operations within the buffer zone violate the agreement.