

Only people can defeat ISIL, not air strikes

Hurriyet Daily News, 12.10.2014



Turkey's prime minister has warned against the supposed risk of popularizing the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) among the people of Syria, by having the Syrian regime involved in a planned military battle against the jihadists.

Amid growing pressure on Ankara to join the military fight against ISIL, Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu sounded bitter when he maintained that time had proven their policies correct in regards to both Iraq and Syria, even if the policies were attacked at the time. Davutoglu also made a point of prioritizing the overthrow of Bashar al-Assad's government in remarks published Oct. 12.

"Our position regarding the Syrian opposition is already obvious," Davutoglu said when reminded in an interview about a statement by the United States which said Turkey had agreed to support efforts to train and equip the Syrian opposition. "We more or less see what is happening on the ground and are making accurate analyses. This training and equipping activity is a delayed one," Davutoglu said. "Frankly speaking, if the United States, the Western countries and Friends of Syria Group had two years ago arrived at the point that they have arrived at today and the moderate opposition had been supported, today, ISIL would not have had a space to use and the regime would not have the power to commit massacres," he said. "I don't see any other way," Davutoglu said when asked whether a recent consensus among allies could pave the way for the moderate opposition through air strikes. "Here is our conviction: in Mosul, in northern Iraq, in Sunni regions of Iraq and Syria, it is only the people who can stop ISIL. Or else, if you try to do it via the regime, then ISIL's attraction will rise, because Sunnis will ally with ISIL since they will give up hoping for an alternative administration.

Syrian people will not stand by al-Assad anymore," he said, in remarks elaborating on what he sees as the unique way of stabilizing Syria. "The same goes for Iraq; Mosul can now be saved only by the people of Mosul. Any attempt by the Iraqi army to save Mosul is pushing Mosul's people to ISIL's side. Actions which are solely based on foreign forces are even less capable because ISIL is gaining power because of anti-American, anti-Western and anti-foreign intervention sentiments. The opposition should be trained and this thesis of ours is not a new one. That is to say, Aleppo will be saved by Aleppo's people, Idlib will be saved by Idlib's people and then they will all together build a new Syria," said Davutoglu. A top Syrian opposition member echoed Davutoglu. Hadi al-Bahra, chairman of the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, said arming the opposition Free Syrian Army (FSA) was the only way to defeat terrorism. "The Western-Arab coalition cannot do its task if it only fights ISIL and does not get rid of Bashar al-Assad's regime, which is the cause of terrorism," al-Bahra was quoted as saying during a meeting in Istanbul on Oct. 11.

Turkish deputy PM blames pro-Kurdish party for protests

Anadolu Agency, 15.10.2014



Turkish deputy Prime Minister Bulent Arinc has accused pro-Kurdish opposition party of inciting last week's deadly illegal protests which broke out across the country. Ostensibly held to show solidarity with Syria's ISIL-besieged Kurdish town of Kobani, the street protests and clashes across Turkey left at least 34 people and two policemen dead.

Scores of vehicles, state buildings, party offices and shops were set on fire or otherwise damaged. Arinc accused the Peoples' Democratic Party of provoking the trouble. "The HDP is responsible for the killings and all material and moral damage during the incidents," Arinc said.

His remarks followed a week of illegal pro-Kurdish protests in Turkey, mainly in its southeastern provinces, which erupted after ISIL militants entered parts of Kobani, also known as Ayn Al-Arab, on October 6. After a call for "solidarity" issued by the pro-Kurdish party via social media, protesters took to the streets from October 7. Many demonstrators accused the Turkish government of allegedly doing nothing to halt the advance of the extremists into the border town, which has become the scene of fierce street battles between Kurdish groups and ISIL militants. Arinc said the real motive behind the violent protests was not Kobani, but to stir up a "longed-for revolt."

"For years until now, they have all failed in such attempts, so they shall fail now," he said referring to Turkey's 'solution process', an effort by the government to end the decades-long conflict with the outlawed PKK, which has claimed the lives of more than 40,000 people. Following the deadly protests, the cabinet led by Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu decided during its Monday meeting to bring in a new comprehensive domestic security law that will strengthen the hand of the Turkish security forces.

Arinc repeated a claim that there are now no civilians left in battered Kobani; all had entered Turkey, he said. More than 180,000 Kurdish refugees from Kobani have crossed into Turkey since Ankara opened the border crossing on September 19 after ISIL militants launched an offensive on the Kurdish-populated town. The battle for control of Kobani between ISIL and the town's Kurdish defenders is now on a knife-edge. Turkey's parliament ratified a motion on October 2 authorizing Davutoglu's government and the armed forces to deploy troops to Syria and Iraq, if necessary, to fight any group threatening the country.

Turkey offers \$200 million for Gaza rebuilding

Anadolu Agency, 12.10.2014



Turkey will dedicate \$200 million for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip until 2017 as part of international efforts to rebuild the embattled enclave devastated by a recent Israeli war.

“I am pleased to announce that Turkey will contribute an additional \$200 million for the period of 2014-2017 for the reconstruction efforts in Gaza,” Can Dizdar, the Turkish Foreign Ministry’s Director-General for the Middle East and North Africa, told an international conference on Gaza reconstruction in Cairo Sunday. Dizdar highlighted Turkish contributions to help alleviate the impact of the recent Israeli war on Gaza.

“Thirty-two million dollar has been collected in a nation-wide aid campaign,” he recalled. “This amount is being used for our humanitarian aid activities, including the provision of fuel, electricity generators and basic relief materials for the Palestinian people,” asserted the Turkish diplomat. He added that over additional \$10 million has been spent from official resources for Gaza. Turkey also has transferred dozens of Palestinians wounded during the Israeli offensive to Turkey for treatment. “We are also working on new assistance projects such as supplying electricity to Gaza and building of prefabricated houses,” said Dizdar. The one-day conference aims to raise funds for rebuilding the embattled Gaza Strip following Israel’s devastating 51-day onslaught on the coastal enclave.

About 30 foreign ministers and representatives of 20 regional and international organizations, including the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, are taking part in the conference. For seven weeks in July and August, Israel pummeled the Gaza Strip with the stated aim of halting rocket fire from the Palestinian territory. The offensive left around 2,160 Palestinians dead and some 11,000 others injured – the vast majority of them civilians – while destroying infrastructure across the coastal strip. Israel also destroyed thousands of homes and facilities in the embattled Palestinian territory, creating tough humanitarian conditions for its 1.8 million residents. Ever since Hamas – which Israel deems a “terrorist” organization – swept 2006 Palestinian legislative polls, Israel has imposed a land and sea blockade on the Gaza Strip.

Israel tightened the blockade further after Hamas wrested control of the enclave from the rival Fatah movement one year later. The Turkish diplomat said that the situation in the Palestinian territories demonstrated the urgent need to find a political settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based on two states living side by side in peace and security. “Any negotiation should take place on an equal footing. Although the Israeli side has been enjoying its statehood since 1948, the Palestinians have been denied to such an inherent right,” he noted. “This is unacceptable.” “Negotiations cannot take place while one party is unilaterally claiming and confiscating the land of the other party,” insisted Dizdar. “Therefore, occupation in Palestine must end, settlement activities must stop.”

The Turkish official also expressed his country's support for the Palestinian national unity government and welcomed a recent reconciliation deal between rivals Fatah and Hamas. "Turkey will continue resolutely with its efforts in cooperation with its international partners towards finding a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," Dizdar said. "We remain committed to support the Palestinian people in their objective of living in peace, prosperity and dignity."

Turkey opens its bases for US and coalition forces in fight against ISIS

The Guardian, 13.10.2014



As Kurdish defenders held off Islamic State militants in Syria's border town of Kobani, US defense officials said that Turkey will let US and coalition forces use its bases, including a key installation within 100 miles of the Syrian border, for operations against Islamic State (Isis) militants in Syria and Iraq.

As night fell on Sunday, the town center was under heavy artillery and mortar fire, Ocalan Iso, deputy head of the Kobani defense council, said by Skype from inside the town. Heavy clashes were under way in the east and south-east, he said, with neither side gaining ground.

Idris Nassan, deputy foreign minister in the Kurdish administration for the Kobani district, said heavy fighting had begun around nightfall in the streets and Kurdish fighters had caught attackers in an ambush. After days of Islamic State advances, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group said Kobani's Kurdish defenders had managed to hold their ground. The Observatory said 36 Isis fighters, all foreigners, were killed the previous day, while eight Kurdish fighters had died. The figures could not be independently verified. Gun battles were taking place on Sunday near administrative buildings the jihadis had seized two days before, it said. The Obama administration had been pressing Ankara to play a larger role against the extremists, who have taken control of large swaths of Syria and Iraq, including territory on Turkey's border, and sent refugees fleeing into Turkey.

US officials confirmed on Saturday that Ankara had agreed to train Syrian moderate forces on Turkish soil. A Turkish government official said on Sunday that Turkey put the number at 4,000 opposition fighters and they would be screened by Turkish intelligence. Also on Sunday, officials confirmed that Turkey agreed to let US and coalition fighter aircraft launch operations against Isis militants in Iraq and Syria from Turkish bases, including Incirlik air base in the south. US defense secretary Chuck Hagel, who has been travelling in South America, has said the US wanted access to the Turkish bases. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to discuss private talks between the Americans and Turks.

US secretary of state, John Kerry, acknowledged the tenuous situation in Kobani. Speaking in Cairo, Kerry said the defense of the town does not define the international counter-terrorism strategy. Isis militants have taken parts of Kobani, Kerry indicated, but not all of it. The United Nations has warned of mass casualties if the border town falls. "There will be ups and there will be downs over the next days as there are in any kind of conflict," Kerry said at the conclusion of an international aid conference for the Gaza Strip. Elaborating on a theme the Obama administration has zeroed in on in recent days, Kerry said the US has been realistic about how quickly it will prevail against the Isis militants. Officials have spoken of years of counter-terrorism efforts ahead. US and coalition aircraft have been bombarding the territory in and around Kobani for days, launching airstrikes on dozens of locations and taking out militants, weapons and other targets. The enclave has been the scene of heavy fighting since late last month, with heavily armed Isis fighters determined to deal a symbolic blow to the coalition air campaign.

US central command said warplanes from the United States, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates launched airstrikes on four locations in Syria on Saturday and Sunday, including three in Kobani that destroyed an Isis fighting position and staging area. Beyond the training and bases, there are other issues the US hopes Turkey will agree to. US officials have not said what all of those would be because discussions are continuing. Earlier on Sunday, President Barack Obama's national security adviser, Susan Rice, made clear the US has not asked "the Turks to send ground forces of their own into Syria." US officials are "continuing to talk to the Turks about other ways that they can play an important role. They are already essential to trying to prevent the flow of foreign fighters" and prevent extremists from exporting oil through Turkey. "So Turkey has many ways it can contribute," Rice told NBC's Meet the Press.

Hagel spoke by telephone with Turkey's defense minister, Ismet Yilmaz, and thanked him for his country's willingness to assist in the fight. Rear Admiral John Kirby, the Pentagon press secretary, said Hagel "noted Turkey's expertise in this area and the responsible manner in which Turkey is handling the other challenges this struggle has placed upon the country, in terms of refugees and border security." Turkey and other American allies are pressing the US to create a no-fly zone inside Syrian territory, and seeking the creation of a secure buffer on the Syrian side of the border with Turkey. A "safe zone" would require the US and its partners to protect ground territory and patrol the sky. Hagel has said American leaders are open to discussing a safe zone, but creating one isn't "actively being considered."

Alongside the Egyptian foreign minister, Sameh Shoukry, Kerry said at a news conference in Cairo that Kobani is "one community and it is a tragedy what is happening there." The primary focus of the fight against the Islamic State group has been in Iraq, where the US is working to help shore up Iraqi security forces, which were overrun in many places by the militants. In Syria, the US is starting by going after the extremists' infrastructure and sources of revenue. In the meantime, Kerry said, Isis "has the opportunity to take advantage of that particular buildup, as they are doing. But I'd rather have our hand than theirs." General Martin Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has estimated it would require hundreds of US aircraft and cost as much as \$1bn a month to maintain an area in Syria safe from attacks by Isis and Syria's air force, with no assurance of a change in battlefield momentum toward ending the Syrian civil war. "Do I anticipate that there could be circumstances in the future where that would be part of the campaign? Yeah," Dempsey told ABC's This Week.

Turkey will not allow citizens to fight in Kobane

Hurriyet Daily News, 16.10.2014



Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu has said Turkey will not allow its citizens to cross to border to Syria to fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) militants alongside Kurds in Kobane. "We don't want our citizens to fight in Syria and we are trying to stop those who illegally cross the border," Davutoglu told the media during a press conference at the Interior Ministry Oct. 15.

Davutoglu also said Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin who died during fighting in Kobane, where fierce clashes have been ongoing since ISIL's first started bidding to capture the town a month ago, caused him "sorrow."

However, he slammed Selahattin Demirtaş, the co-chair of the Kurdish-leftist bloc of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) for his remarks this week that "tens of thousands Kurdish youth" were ready to fight against ISIL if the Turkish-Syrian border gates into Kobane are opened. "If any Syrian wants to go to Syria for fighting, the border gates are open for them, but even they themselves do not want to go," he said, adding that around 300 members of the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) had recently laid down their arms in Syria and taken refuge in Turkey. "Just a small group of them want to cross the border to fight ISIL militants, whereas the majority wants to stay safely in Turkey," Davutoglu said. "What can we do? Do we force them to go back?" The prime minister stressed that Turkey will "never let" foreign fighters cross its borders, vowing that "the Turkish border gates are open only for humanitarian purposes."

Turkish PM calls for 'all inclusive' Syria strategy

Anadolu Agency, 16.10.2014



Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said a unilateral intervention in Syria would do harm as he called for an “all inclusive” effort to resolve the crisis. He said Turkey’s demand for a safe haven for refugees includes Syria’s highly-populated regions along the Turkish border, which were hit by the Bashar al-Assad regime and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or the ISIL.

“It must be in the north of Aleppo as it has been under threat from both regime and the ISIL militants,” he said. Turkey pushed the international community, including the UN to establish a no-fly zone and a safe haven for refugees.

Thousands of civilians from the Syrian border town of Kobani have been fleeing into Turkey since mid-September when their homes came under attack by ISIL militants. Davutoglu said the safe havens must also involve regions in Idlib near the border with Turkey, northern Latakia, Hasakah, Jarablus and Kobani. “It should be an area under international guarantee so that the Syrian people feel secure from air and land offensives,” he added. The prime minister said Turkey preferred the UN Security Council to determine the areas to be designated as safe havens in Syria. He said the international coalition could provide a safe zone like it did in the past during the First Gulf War in the 90s, which protected civilians from Saddam Hussain’s attacks. Referring to the calls for Ankara to intervene militarily in Syria to save Kobani, he said: “if you demand Turkey to intervene alone in Syria in the absence of such a zone, it means you want Turkey to take the entire burden on its own.”

The parliament had ratified a motion on October 2 that authorized the Turkish government and the armed forces to deploy Turkish troops to Syria and Iraq, if necessary, to fight any group that threatened Turkey. But the prime minister said that any unilateral intervention by Turkish troops would not yield a final settlement to the overall crisis in Syria. Davutoglu instead called for an “all-inclusive intervention” together with all international community members not only to save Kobani, but also against “all atrocities and villains in Syria.” He said Turkey believed an intervention by only one side in the region “will do more harm than good.” “What we emphasize here is that no matter which strategy is conducted, it must be applied to all of Syria; it must neither be temporary, nor uni-dimensional or restricted to certain regions,” he added.

No deal on Incirlik yet but talks continuing

Hurriyet Daily News, 13.10.2014



Turkey denied claims that it has reached a deal with the United States for the use of its military bases, including the Incirlik base, in the fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), but stressed that talks were still underway to determine Ankara's contribution to the United States-led coalition.

"There is not a new agreement on the use of Incirlik. The U.S. is using the base given the existing agreement. There are requests and expectations from the U.S. but talks are still continuing," a source from the office of the prime minister told.

Turkey and the U.S. have been holding lengthy discussions over the former's participation in an international coalition built to destroy the ISIL militants in Iraq and Syria. The unnamed source said the two countries have agreed on the training of moderate Syrian rebels but underlined that where and how these training efforts will be carried out were yet to be decided. A U.S. military planning team is expected to launch technical talks with their Turkish counterparts this week in Ankara, which will follow up on U.S. President Barack Obama's anti-ISIL fight coordinator Gen. John Allen's trip last week to the Turkish capital. The source's statement came a day after some senior U.S. officials told the media that Turkey has made new commitments on the use of its military bases and airspace for airstrikes to be carried out by the coalition forces.

The source recalled that U.S. reconnaissance flights over Iraqi airspace were being carried out from the Incirlik Base from a deal made in 2007. Senior Turkish officials have been continuing to place conditions on coalition forces before allowing the use of Turkish military bases. Both President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu have made statements in that direction. In his interviews with the Turkish media over the weekend, Davutoglu linked the opening of Turkish bases to the anti-ISIL coalition with the establishment of security zones and no-fly zones in Syria. In his address in Istanbul yesterday, Erdoğan cited the same conditions and also added the destruction of the Bashar al-Assad regime as the main objective of the coalition offensive into Syria.

3-4 percent growth not enough for Turkey, says finance minister

Reuters, 15.10.2014



Turkey must reform its economy to get back to high growth, Finance Minister Mehmet Simsek said on Oct. 15, after data showed unemployment hitting a four-year high and the current account deficit widening.

“Turkey cannot be satisfied with current annual growth of 3-4 percent, we need to get back on the high growth path. Extensive micro reforms are needed for this,” Simsek said, adding that Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu would announce a number of reform plans soon. The government this month cut its growth forecasts to 3.3 percent from 4 percent for 2014 and to 4 percent from 5 percent for next year.

Energy-dependent Turkey’s main economic weakness is its current account deficit, which leaves it reliant on foreign fund flows. Data yesterday showed the deficit rose to \$2.77 billion in August from \$2.65 billion in July, although one economist played down the problem. “We consider the expansion of the current account deficit in August as a one-off event, and expect the rebalancing trend of the external accounts to continue in the upcoming months,” said Deniz Cicek, economist at Finansbank. Other data showed the unemployment rate rose to 9.8 percent in the three months from June to August, its highest level since October 2010. It was 9.1 percent in the May-July period. The budget, meanwhile, showed a deficit of 9.2 billion lira (\$4 billion) in September. Turkey slashed its growth estimates and raised its inflation forecast for 2014 and 2015 at the beginning of October, citing unfavorable conditions in the global economy.

Turkish government officials then warned that tensions in Iraq and Syria, as well as Ukraine, combined with slower growth in Europe could hit the economy, putting pressure on the central bank to cut rates and support growth. Fighting inflation will continue to be the fundamental priority of Turkey’s economic plan in 2015 to 2017, the government said, along with boosting growth and reducing the current account deficit. Finance Minister Simsek said fiscal tightening would continue, especially to help the Central Bank in fighting against high inflation rates. “We also need to increase public saving levels to reduce the current account gap ... We need a healthy financial space for sustainable growth. As long as we tighten our budget, we will become stronger against any economic shock,” he noted.

Inflation's rise to 9 pct no good for Turkish economy, says Deputy PM Babacan

Anadolu Agency, 12.10.2014



A rise of inflation of up to 9 percent bodes ill for Turkey, and the government and the Central Bank must reduce inflation rates to manageable levels in the forthcoming period, said Deputy Prime Minister Ali Babacan.

“Inflation numbers rising up to 9 percent are not good for Turkey. It will be the first priority of the government and the Central Bank to reduce [the numbers] to manageable levels in the forthcoming period. We will be closely watching inflation numbers, as we already cited in our Medium Term Economy Program, which will be used to determine our economic agenda for the next three years,” Babacan said.

He noted stricter finance policies and lower budget deficit would definitely help in the coming period, adding that pricing in some goods and services would be carefully set by the government by closely watching the risk of higher inflation rates. “We will have an inflation-observant pricing policy in any goods and/or services upon which the state has direct and/or indirect effect, such as in food and energy sectors. The Central Bank plays a crucial role in fighting against higher inflation by means of its monetary policies. Price stability is one of the biggest priorities of our Central Bank, which is supporting the growth and stability policies of our government right now by considering not to contradict its own priority of price stability,” he said. Stricter financial policies and lower budget deficits will be the most useful tools at the World Bank/IMF Annual Meetings, he also said.

Babacan said the Turkish government would also try to decrease Turkey's current account gap in a decisive manner, adding that higher growth rates and employment rates could then be expected. “Some 1.2 million new jobs were created in the last 12 months. This is a huge increase. We succeeded in adding 1.2 million new jobs by growing 4.1 percent last year and 3.3 percent this year. This is only possible thanks to high confidence in our economy. The private sector continues to hire new people as they have confidence in the future, enabling the economy to rise and employment rates to increase,” he said. Turkey aims to grow 4 percent this year, Babacan said, adding that the government would continue to make structural reforms and increase productivity levels to reach its growth targets.

Barzani says Turkey sent arms to KRG, PYD members treated in Turkey

Hurriyet Daily News, 13.10.2014



Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) leader Masoud Barzani said Turkey sent arms to the Kurdish government in northern Iraq but requested that this not be made public. He also said Turkey is treating more than 400 people from the Democratic Union Party (PYD) who were wounded during the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant's (ISIL) advance on the Kurdish town of Kobane in northern Syria.

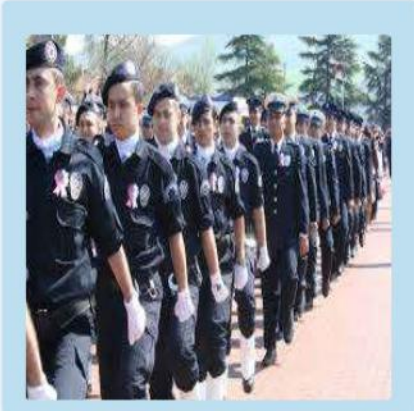
Barzani told Sky News Arabic that Turkey was also among the countries that sent arms to the region when ISIL attacked Iraqi Kurdish, adding that Turkey did not want this news to be announced.

"We have to tell the truth. On our first night when we were attacked by ISIL, Iran sent us two airplanes full of weapons. This was a great help for that moment ... We would have expected it from Turkey too, and Turkey sent [arms] later but asked us not to announce it due to domestic conjuncture. The presidential elections were near and ISIL was holding their hostages," the KRG leader said. Meanwhile, Turkey is treating some 422 PYD members injured in ISIL's attacks, in the Suruc district of the southeastern province of Sanliurfa.

In addition to the civilians who fled from Kobane to Turkey, members of the PYD who have fought against ISIL since Oct. 4 and have been wounded in Kobane were also treated in Turkish hospitals. High level military officers of the PYD are reported to be among the 422 PYD members being treated in Turkey. Allegedly, the Suruc State Hospital, where the PYD members are being treated, is not serving civilians except in emergency cases, amid a massive patient increase over the past week. Some 40 outlawed Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) militants who were wounded in fights against ISIL have also been brought to Turkey for medical treatment.

Turkish gov't proposes open-ended extension of jurisdiction, powers of police

Hurriyet Daily News, 15.11.2014



Both the president and the prime minister announced that they would further empower security forces, following recent protests against Ankara's policies in Syria that left more than 35 people dead. Accordingly, two deputies of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) introduced a bill to Parliament late envisioning "effective investigation methods".

The bill introduced by Kirikkale deputy Ramazan Can and Isparta deputy Recep Özel calls for an extension of authorities to law enforcement officers through amendments to both the Turkish Penal Code (TCK) and the Code on Criminal Procedure (CMK).

The current CMK's article on search warrants for a suspect or defendant includes the requirement that there be "strong suspicion based on concrete evidence." The planned amendment changes the criterion of "reasonable doubt based on concrete evidence." It permits the confiscation of property, rights and holdings in the event of crimes related to "armed organizations" and "providing weaponry to armed organizations." If the proposal is adopted, confiscation will be possible in investigations involving crimes such as violation of the Constitution, crimes against the legislative body, crimes against the government, armed revolts against the government, armed organizations, providing weaponry to armed organizations and making an agreement to commit a crime.

The defendant will not be permitted to review the contents of case files or make copies of documents if a judge, upon the request from the public prosecutor, decides that it would jeopardize the aims of the investigation. Crimes requiring wiretapping will be expanded and crimes committed against the state such as disrupting the unity and integrity of the state, collaborating with the enemy, provoking war against the state, acting against fundamental national interests, destroying military facilities, acting in agreement in favor of an enemy state's military forces, recruiting soldiers against a foreign power, conspiring to the advantage of enemy military movements, providing material and financial aid to an enemy state, committing crimes against the constitutional order in ways such as violating the Constitution, committing crimes against the legislative body, staging armed insurrections against the government and founding an organization to commit such crimes will all be added into the related article.

If the new proposals are adopted, traditional ceremonies held for the opening of the judicial year that has been held since 1943 will no longer be staged. The judicial year opening ceremonies used to bring the country's president, the head of Cabinet, and the justice minister together with top judicial officials as the guests of the head of the Supreme Court of Appeals.

Turkey nears free trade agreement with Japan

Anadolu Agency, 11.10.2014



Turkey is close to signing a free-trade agreement with Japan, Turkey's Economy Minister Nihat Zeybekci said. Zeybekci said the Turkish ministry's priority was to sign the extensive agreement as technical negotiations had been completed.

Zeybekci: "Technical negotiations were concluded and the framework settled. Starting from December 1, we will start official negotiations. We aim to finish the negotiations at the end of 2015." Zeybekci said Japan is struggling with the effects of the global economic crisis, and it needs to manufacture, export more and invest its funds in other countries, and Turkey offered great potential.

He said: "Turkey is one of most important countries which can give this opportunity to Japan. "We believe this connection would be beneficial for both sides, as well as for other countries." As an example, Zeybekci pointed out that Japan was the fourth-biggest food importer globally while Turkey was the largest food manufacturer in Europe and the seventh-largest globally, saying this was one of many trade opportunities which could be used for the benefit of both sides. Zeybekci said: "We have corresponding problems. Turkey imposes limitations on some Japanese food products, and Japan has some limitations on Turkish products.

"We will propose that Japan acknowledges the certifications and authorization of both countries ... which would render extra audit and laboratory processes unnecessary." "We plan to resolve difficulties in the export of food, vegetables and poultry meat by the end of 2014, and start trade in 2015," he added. Turkey also believes the Japan-Turkey partnership promises great opportunities in tourism and the hosting of ageing Japanese people, thanks to more competitive costs, Zeybekci said. Noting trade volume between the two countries currently stands at \$0.4 billion, Zeybekci said he hoped 2015 will be the first year in which exports to Japan pass the \$1 billion threshold.

EU should invest more in southeastern Turkey

Anadolu Agency, 16.10.2014



Europe should invest more in southeastern Turkey, says Vittoria Alliate di Villafranca, director of regional and urban policy at the European Commission. Visiting Ankara and Istanbul to meet representatives of different ministries to discuss on-going projects, Villafranca told AA that the mission doesn't concentrate on big cities, but small cities that need investment and financial support.

"We have three programs which are environment, transport and regional competitiveness in Turkey. What we are doing here is preparing Turkey for the process of enlargement for accession," she said.

Turkey, which first applied to join the bloc in 1987, must comply with 35 'chapters' setting out reforms needed to become a member. So far, 14 have been opened while 17 remain blocked and a further four are yet to be discussed. When asked about Turkey's performance as candidate state to join the bloc, Villafranca said Turkey is already doing well although faces difficulties many member states experience as well. "What is needed is really getting used to the way regional programs can be successful. That means going through the various phases, you can't just jump into a project and get the funding. It is a matter of identifying the needs and objectives."

Support for joining the EU has increased over the last year with 53 percent of Turks supporting accession, up from last year's 45 percent, according to the Transatlantic Trends survey. The mission lately has financed two projects in Turkey, the Luleburgaz wastewater treatment plant with a total budget of 14.3 million euros and Ankara-Istanbul High Speed Train Project where EU grant is limited to 136 million euro for the Kosekoy-Gebze section (56 kilometer) of the whole line, which is approximately 500 km, according to EU External Action.

Turkey-Germany discuss EU, US free trade talk

Anadolu Agency, 15.10.2014



Economy Minister Nihat Zeybekci raised Turkey's concerns over the ongoing EU-U.S. free trade talks. Sigmar Gabriel, German Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy and Vice Chancellor, has signaled Berlin will consider Turkish concerns and demands on reforming the Customs Union.

The Customs Union allows Turkey and the EU member states to exchange goods without any customs restrictions. "The further development of our Customs Union and the possible impacts of a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership on Turkey are important issues of our bilateral cooperation," Gabriel said.

The transatlantic trade agreement between the U.S. and EU is part of the Customs Union. But since Turkey is not an EU member yet, it remains excluded from the negotiations. The EU and Turkey established the Customs Union in 1995 as it was seen as a keystone to a prospective EU membership. Early this month, Turkish Economy Minister Zeybekci called on the EU and the U.S. to address Turkey's concerns. "If Turkey doesn't become a member of a free-trade agreement between the U.S. and EU, nor concluded a simultaneous free-trade agreement with the U.S., it would be impossible for Turkey to maintain its customs union agreement with the EU," he said. The EU heavyweight Germany is Turkey's main trade partner. In 2013, the bilateral trade volume reached €33 billion. German Vice Chancellor hoped to further develop the bilateral economic ties. "Germany and Turkey have a very dynamic economic partnership. Such a partnership is of course not something given, but something achieved through hard work," Gabriel said. "The Joint Economic and Trade Commission and the German-Turkish Energy Forum are important instruments to further develop our cooperation," he said.

Turkey launches new strategy for EU accession

Anadolu Agency, 17.10.2014



Turkey is launching a new communication strategy to support its bid for EU membership. The new strategy, intended to reverse the decline in public opinion support for Turkey's membership in the EU, the country, will reinforce the value of Turkey's participation, according to the country's ministry of EU Affairs.

"The image of Turkey in the EU in the last three to four years has been damaged, also the image of EU has been damaged," said Volkan Bozkir, Turkey's EU Minister and Chief Negotiator on Thursday during a speech at Carnegie Europe in the EU capital Brussels.

In order for this image to be restored, the EU Communication Strategy has been prepared, aiming at informing the public about the benefits of the EU accession. Bozkir said investing in civil societies, or NGOs, is one of the pillars for the communication strategy. He said there were only around 20 NGO's in Turkey in the 80s but that number has increased to over 90 thousand today. Bozkir said 180 million Euros will be spent on NGOs. Bozkir's visit to Brussels comes a week after the EU published its 2014 progress report on Turkey, which he called 'objective and balanced in general.' While the report praises Turkey's 'invaluable' support for Syrian refugees, it also criticizes the country over its "government interference in the judiciary and bans on social media. Bozkir said six reform packages have been made with respect to the judiciary. Last Sunday, 14 thousand judges and public prosecutors voted for 10 of 22 members of the High Board of Judges and Prosecutor's Council.

"We give priority to judiciary independence and also to the credibility of the judiciary," Bozkir said. "If you don't have a credible justice system, nothing will go in the right direction." Bozkir, in response to a question about freedom of press in Turkey, said : "I had said that Twitter ban was a mistake and I am still a minister." He also denied claims suggesting that freedom of expression and freedom of press were under government pressure did not reflect the truth. The Turkish authorities lifted the ban on Twitter in April after the constitutional court said that blocking access to the website was contrary to fundamental rights and freedom of expression. Access to Twitter was blocked in Turkey on March 21 on the grounds that it violated personal rights and privacy.

UN elects five new members to the Security Council

Anadolu Agency, 16.10.2014



Turkey will be the voice and conscience of countries that have those expectations from it, the Turkish foreign minister said. "There may be some countries disturbed by our principled stance, and there have always been those, who, after some time, confess that Turkey's position was right. So, we could not abandon our principles for the sake of getting more votes," Mevlut Cavusoglu said after the U.N. Security Council election of five new temporary members.

Congratulating the elected countries, Cavusoglu said Turkey would continue to maintain its cooperation with international and regional institutions.

"We cannot relinquish our responsibilities in the U.N. just because we were not elected," he said. Turkey lost its bid for a seat on the Council in a runoff vote against Spain after both countries failed to garner the required number of votes in the first two rounds. Spain won on the third ballot by receiving 132 votes to Turkey's 60 votes. Turkey was vying for one of the two seats allocated to the "Western European and Others Group," from which New Zealand won access to the chamber in the first round. The U.N. General Assembly elected Angola, Malaysia, New Zealand, Spain and Venezuela as non-permanent members of the Security Council. Angola, Malaysia and Venezuela were the only candidates for their regional groups, so their election was virtually certain. The new non-permanent members will serve two-year terms beginning Jan. 1. The Security Council comprises 15 members, with five permanent members – China, France, Russia, the U.K and the U.S. -- having the right of veto. Others still serving include Chad, Chile, Jordan, Lithuania and Nigeria, who won their seats in a 2013 election.

Military chiefs of anti-ISIL coalition meet in U.S.

Agence France-Presse, 14.10.2014



Military commanders from the U.S.-led coalition against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) will meet in Washington on Oct. 14 to discuss ways to halt the jihadist group. Top brass, including national chiefs of staff, from 22 countries, will also meet U.S. President Barack Obama at Andrews Air Force Base outside the U.S. capital.

Australia, Bahrain, Belgium, Britain, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and the United States will be represented.

The generals will “discuss a common vision on the counter-ISIL campaign, challenges and the way ahead,” said U.S. Colonel Ed Thomas, spokesman for the chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff. It is the first time such high-ranking military officials from so many countries have come together since the coalition - which on paper now includes about 60 countries was formed in September. But U.S. officials were tight-lipped about precisely what was expected to emerge, and said major strategy announcements were not likely. “These are military leaders, not policy makers, so one should not expect news announcements out of this conference,” a State Department official said. “The gathering is an opportunity to meet personally and discuss the vision, challenges and way ahead for the counter-ISIL campaign.”

Some partners, such as France, are pushing for concrete decisions. French spokesman Colonel Gilles Jaron said Paris wants to “come to an agreement on key policy issues” and “to participate in the development of a joint action plan for regional focus.” One of the ideas on the table the creation of a buffer zone along the Turkey-Syria border, which coalition members disagree about and which Washington said will probably not dominate the agenda. Turkey and France support the creation of such a de-militarized area and on Oct. 12 its defense minister Jean-Louis Le Drian said such a zone should be implemented urgently. Coalition warplanes have been bombing the ISIL militants in Iraq and Syria in recent weeks, but the group continues to gain ground, threaten key towns and put pressure on Iraqi troops.

ISIL militants fought their way into the center of the Syrian town of Kobane near the Turkish border, sparking fears its beleaguered Kurdish residents could fall prey to the brutal group. Iraqi ground troops are under mounting pressure in Iraq’s western Anbar province, prompting the United States to drop them military supplies and food over the weekend. Obama has said the United States will not put “boots on the ground” in either Iraq or Syria and, despite recent jihadist advances; his Secretary of State John Kerry insists the current strategy is sound. “We are confident about our ability to pull this strategy together, given the fact that every country in the region is opposed to Daesh,” Kerry said Oct. 12, using the Arabic name for the ISIL.

“Over time we believe that the strategy will build, the capacity will build, Daesh will become more isolated,” he said. Tuesday’s meeting is expected to start at 10:00 a.m. and last most of the day. U.S. military chief General Martin Dempsey and the commander for the Middle East and Central Asia, General Lloyd Austin, will lead the meeting of their allied counterparts.

Obama rallies coalition commanders against ISIL jihadists

Agence France-Presse, 15.10.2014



President Barack Obama attempted to rally allied commanders around his emerging strategy to defeat Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) on Oct. 14, as the U.S.-led air armada stepped up its raids in Syria.

Coalition jets carried out two dozen strikes to relieve pressure on Kobane, but Obama admitted to deep concern about the Syrian border town’s fate and he warned of a long campaign ahead. In Washington, the president and the U.S. military’s top officer General Martin Dempsey met senior commanders from more than 20 Western and Arab allies involved in the campaign.

“One of the things that has emerged from the discussions, both before I came and during my visit here, is that this is going to be a long-term campaign,” Obama warned. “There are not quick fixes involved. We’re still at the early stages,” he said, explaining that efforts were focused on breaking the siege of Kobane and on halting the ISIL advance in western Iraq. “As with any military effort, there will be days of progress and there are going to be periods of setback, but our coalition is united behind this long-term effort,” he added. A U.S. military official, summing up the situation, said: “the coalition has strategic momentum although ISIL has tactical momentum.” ISIL, he added “is an adaptive enemy.” The coalition will also need to adapt “by leveraging all elements of power,” he added, stressing that military action alone “will not be decisive.”

The meeting of military chiefs from 22 countries also included representatives from Turkey and Saudi Arabia and was led by General Martin Dempsey, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. Lt. Gen. Erdal Öztürk, the head of the Chief of Staff’s Operation Division, represents Turkey at the meeting as Necdet Özel, the chief of staff, did not participate reportedly due to his busy schedule and growing security threats immediately across from the Turkish border.

The military meeting, at an airbase outside Washington, came after allied warplanes carried out its latest raids: 21 strikes over two days around Kobane, a Kurdish town on Syria’s border with Turkey. The bombing was designed to halt an ISIL offensive which has seen jihadists push into the town, threatening a massacre under the noses of the Turkish troops and world media watching from the border.

A Syrian exile rights group reported that the latest strikes had at least saved Kobane from “falling entirely into the jihadists’ hands,” but Obama admitted he was still worried. “At this point we’re also focused on the fighting that is taking place in Iraq’s Anbar province, and we’re deeply concerned about the situation in and around the Syrian town of Kobane,” Obama said. ISIL fighters are now in almost complete control of Sunni-majority Anbar, Iraq’s largest province, and are closing in on the western outskirts of Baghdad, headquarters of the Shiite-led government. The talks marked the first time high-ranking officers from so many nations have come together since the U.S.-led coalition was formed in September and which now, on paper, includes about 60 countries. Turkey, which has faced a three-decade Kurdish insurgency, has tightened security of its porous Syrian border after the fighting in Kobane sparked the exodus of 200,000 refugees.

France’s President François Hollande urged the West’s NATO ally to open the border to allow aid to reach Kurdish fighters mounting a desperate defense of the town, which “could fall at any moment.” And U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said that Ankara had at least allowed the U.S.-led coalition use of “certain facilities” while agreeing to host and train Syrian fighters opposed to the ISIL group. “Turkey has agreed to host and train and equip people,” Kerry told a press conference after meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Paris. “It certainly has allowed the use of certain facilities, and we don’t need to get into specifics except to say that I don’t believe there is any discrepancy with respect to what they will or won’t do.” He said that Turkey, a NATO ally which borders both Iraq and Syria, would define its role “on their timetable as we go forward in assigning and undertaking responsibilities within the coalition.”

“Turkey obviously has a very important role to play in this process going forward,” added the top U.S. diplomat. Kurdish fighters were trying to push into the eastern sector of the town, under ISIL control, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a British-based rights group which has a wide network of sources inside Syria. Meanwhile, Iraqi forces are reported to be under intensifying pressure in Anbar province, where the town of Heet fell to the ISIL advance on Oct. 13, according to Iraqi military sources. Pro-government forces in northern Iraq were under pressure near the strategic Baiji oil refinery, where U.S. aircraft Sunday dropped supplies including food, water and ammunition to Iraqi troops for the first time. In Baghdad, an Iraqi lawmaker and prominent Shiite militia leader, Ahmed al-Khafaji, was one of at least 21 people killed by a suicide car bomb in the Shiite neighborhood of Kadhimiyah. The third bombing in Kadhimiyah in four days, Khafaji’s killing was immediately claimed by ISIL.

Hundreds of ISIL militants reportedly killed in Iraq

Anadolu Agency, 12.10.2014



At least 115 Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant militants have reportedly been killed in gun battles with Iraqi Army troops in the country's Anbar province, an Iraqi commander said on Sunday. Anbar's operations chief, Rashid Falih, told reporters that ISIL attacked three Iraqi military headquarters, all located in the al-Qerame district of the province.

The Iraqi troops responded as soon as the militants began to open fire. The clash swiftly turned into an all-out gun battle, killing at least 115 militants including ISIL suicide bombers. Iraqi air forces supported their ground troops' counterattack against the militants and also destroyed six of their vehicles.

The commander refused to reveal any details regarding casualties among Iraqi troops. At least 26 people, including security forces, have been killed and 42 others wounded in separate suicide attacks in Iraq's Diyala province and the capital Baghdad, officials have told the Anadolu Agency. The Head of Diyala's provincial council, Sadiq al-Husseini, said the suicide attacks were carried out by two explosive-laden vehicles aimed at governorate and municipal buildings in Diyala. A total of 22 people, including Iraqi police officers, died in these two attacks, Husseini continued. In the eastern and southern parts of the capital, Baghdad, two bombings have left four people dead and 12 others wounded. No one has claimed responsibility for these attacks so far.

State-backed Iraq Shiite militias commit 'war crimes'

Agence France-Presse, 14.10.2014



Shiite militias backed by the Iraqi army are committing war crimes against civilians in their fightback against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), rights watchdog Amnesty International said Oct. 14.

It accused the Baghdad government of supporting and arming groups of Shiite fighters who have carried out a string of kidnappings and killings against Sunni civilians in response to ISIL's lightning capture of swathes of Iraqi territory in June. Amnesty said it had seen evidence of "scores" of "deliberate execution style killings" against Sunnis across Iraq.

Moreover Sunni families have to pay tens of thousands of dollars to free abducted relatives. The watchdog called on the government of newly-installed Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi to rein in the scores of militias targeting civilians across Iraq. "By granting its blessing to militias who routinely commit such abhorrent abuses, the Iraqi government is sanctioning war crimes and fuelling a dangerous cycle of sectarian violence that is tearing the country apart," said Donatella Rovera. The Sunni extremist fighters of ISIL seized control of swathes of territory in a June offensive that saw many Iraqi army units abandon their posts. The group now controls large parts of western and northern Iraq, including the country's second city of Mosul. Army missions to regain ground are often conducted alongside allied groups of Shiite fighters, raising fears Iraq is returning to the deadly sectarian violence of the mid-2000s.

"The growing power of Shiite militias has contributed to an overall deterioration in security and an atmosphere of lawlessness," Amnesty said. Rights organizations accuse the ISIL group of widespread abuses, including the targeting of civilians in suicide bomb attacks and carrying out executions on captured soldiers, activists and journalists. The group boasted on Oct. 13 it had revived slavery, providing its fighters with minority Yazidi women and children taken from northern Iraq as spoils of war. Amnesty accused Shiite armed groups of using the battle against IS as a pretext for carrying out "revenge" attacks on members of the Sunni community. "Shiite militias are ruthlessly targeting Sunni civilians on a sectarian basis under the guise of fighting terrorism," it said.

The watchdog also accused Iraqi government forces of serious rights violations, including evidence of "torture and ill-treatment of detainees, as well as deaths in custody" of inmates held on terror charges. It said the body of a lawyer and father of two young children who had died in custody showed bruises and may have been electrocuted by guards. Another man was given electric shocks and threatened "with rape with a stick" before he was released without charge, Amnesty added. "Successive Iraqi governments have displayed a callous disregard for fundamental human rights principles," Rovera said. "The new government must now change course and put in place effective mechanisms to investigate abuses."

UN's Ban slams Israel settlements, urges peace talks

Agence France-Presse, 13.10.2014



UN chief Ban Ki-moon condemned Israeli settlement building and warned against “provocations” at Jerusalem’s holy sites, calling for renewed peace talks to avoid further conflict with the Palestinians.

Ban was in the West Bank city of Ramallah where he met Palestinian prime minister Rami Hamdallah, a day after a Cairo conference at which international donors pledged \$5.4 billion (4.3 billion€) to rebuild the war-ravaged Gaza Strip. “The amount that has been committed, pledged by the international community, is quite encouraging,” Ban said at a joint news conference with Hamdallah.

The funds would go towards the “urgently needed” reconstruction of infrastructure and homes, he said of an “unprecedented” level of destruction in Gaza where nearly 2,200 Palestinians were killed in the 50-day war in July and August. On the Israeli side, 73 people were killed, mostly soldiers. But “while rebuilding is important, we must tackle the root causes of instability,” Ban said. “I once again strongly condemn the continued settlement activity by Israel,” the UN chief said, echoing international condemnation of plans for new settler homes on occupied Palestinian territory. The White House and European Union have slammed Israel’s approval in September for 2,600 new settlement units in Israeli-annexed Arab east Jerusalem. The settlements issue has caused the breakdown of numerous rounds of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

“I am also deeply concerned by repeated provocations at the holy sites in Jerusalem. These only inflame tensions and must stop,” Ban said. He spoke hours after Israeli police and Palestinian protesters clashed at the flashpoint Al-Aqsa mosque compound, the scene of the outbreak of the second Palestinian intifada or uprising. The site is holy to both Jews and Muslims and is an underlying cause of Israeli-Palestinian tension, which has heightened in Jerusalem since the Gaza conflict. Ban urged the two sides to revive a stagnant peace process that collapsed in April despite intense U.S. efforts. “I urge Palestinians to show courage and continue engaging in the... peace process... and Israelis to do the same,” Ban said. “Time is not on the side of peace.

“We need to act immediately to prevent a deepening of an already unsustainable status quo... this is the only way to avoid yet another tragic conflict in the future,” he said. Gaza’s war displaced more than a quarter of its population of 1.7 million, and left 100,000 people homeless. The \$5.4 billion in aid pledged in Cairo on Sunday includes \$1 billion from Qatar, \$212 million from the U.S. and 450 million euros from the EU. The provision of aid will be overseen jointly by the UN and the West Bank-based Palestinian Authority, amid concerns that unchecked imports could fall into the hands of militants, including those of Hamas, against which Israel waged its military operation. Hamas and rivals Fatah, which dominates the PA, signed a unity deal in April under which a consensus government was sworn in.

Its first full cabinet meeting was in Gaza on Thursday, in a show of unity ahead of the Cairo conference. "The Palestinian government of national consensus will play a lead role in... supervising Gaza's reconstruction with the support of the international community," Ban said. "We'd like to see the unity government succeed in assuming its rightful responsibilities and functions in Gaza." The unity government is to take over administrative control from Hamas, the de facto power in Gaza since 2006. Hamdallah stressed the need to "entrench national reconciliation", but also called on Israel to ease its eight-year blockade on Gaza to allow in construction materials. "These programmes will fail to achieve their goals if the Israeli siege on Gaza is not lifted immediately," he warned. Ban said he was confident that if properly implemented, the aid "can allow for the large-scale reconstruction urgently needed in Gaza".

British MPs to vote on recognizing Palestinian state

Agence France-Presse, 13.10.2014



British lawmakers were to hold a non-binding vote Monday on recognizing Palestine although government ministers will abstain in a sign of how politically sensitive the issue is. The debate is being closely watched internationally after Sweden incurred Israeli wrath this month for saying it will recognize Palestine.

While the vote, initiated by backbencher Grahame Morris of the main opposition Labour party, is purely symbolic and will not change government policy, it is thought to be the first substantial debate on the issue in the House of Commons since 2012.

Labour's leadership has said that MPs who are in the Commons when the vote takes place must back it although a number of high profile figures are reportedly uncomfortable with the motion and will not show up. Among the two parties which make up Britain's coalition government, a small number of Conservatives and many Liberal Democrats are likely to vote in favor of the motion. "If the vote is a success, it would put a tremendous amount of pressure on the current government and the next government, which is likely to be a Labor government, to recognize Palestine as a state," Morris told. "The UK recognizing Palestine could give decisive momentum to more EU states following suit." Members of the government are set to abstain, Prime Minister David Cameron's official spokesman said. "We think that what you should do is you should do everything you can that's supportive of a successful and sustainable outcome based on a two-state solution," the spokesman told.

"The government's position is very clear and hasn't changed, so I think that is a very clear indication of the British government's approach." An online petition which initiated the application for the debate has gained more than 111,000 signatures of support, Morris said. The debate, which is unlikely to start before 1500 GMT, follows the collapse of peace talks between Israel and Palestine

and this year's conflict in Gaza in which more than 2,000 Palestinians and dozens of Israelis were killed. The Palestinian Authority estimates at 134 the number of countries that have recognised Palestine as a state although the number is disputed and several recognitions by European Union member states date back to the Soviet era. Newly-elected Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Lofven this month announced his intention to recognise a Palestinian state. Sayeeda Warsi, a former British minister who stepped down in August saying the government had failed to condemn Israeli military action in Gaza severely enough, called on MPs to lead by example.

"There is a lack of political will and our moral compass is missing," the former Foreign Office minister told. "Somehow we have to breathe new life into these negotiations, and one of the ways we can do that is by recognizing the state of Palestine." Morris said recognition would be "a clear and legitimate message that Britain and others recognize Palestinian rights and that the illegal settlement enterprise has no validity". And Britain's former international development minister Alan Duncan said London had an "historic and moral duty" to recognize the state of Palestine. Britain abstained in 2012 from a vote in the UN on giving the Palestinians the rank of observer state, which was granted despite opposition from the United States and Israel. Washington said it believes it is "premature" to recognize a Palestinian state, following Israel's criticism of Sweden's position.

Hong Kong protests 'out of control,' says government

Anadolu Agency, 12.10.2014



As the pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong entered their third week, the territory's Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying said the movement had "spun out of control." In a Sunday television interview with a local broadcaster TVB, Leung said the government did not want to clear protesters from the streets unless it had to but added that if police did use force, they would use the minimum required.

Leung who ordered police to use tear gas and pepper spray in the early days of the protest, only to back down in the face of widespread popular uproar went on to say he did not want to see young people get hurt.

The head of government for the former British colony, who took up his post in 2012, reiterated that he would not step down, as protesters have demanded. In response to the interview, the protest leadership issued a joint statement that pinned the blame for disagreement over political reform on the Hong Kong government. Claiming the government had submitted an erroneous report on reform to Beijing, the leaders said: "According to the standards of a civilized society, an official mired in such scandals would have resigned long ago, lest he damage the government's credibility and ability to govern. "If Leung really had the interests of the people at heart, he should also know he needs to depart."

Leung's television appearance came after a night of tension and scuffles at one of the two major protest sites, Mong Kok, where hundreds of protesters camped overnight. Tension between police and protesters peaked at around 02.00 local time when plainclothes police demanded identification documents from protesters reinforcing barricades. The demonstrators responded by demanding the officers show their identification and after a heated argument several policemen grabbed one protester and dragged him away. The South China Morning Post reported that at least three protesters were arrested. The stand-off ended when police retreated. Protester James Bang claimed a policeman hit him on the leg with a baton during the scuffle.

Hong Kong police use force to clear protesters from one road

Anadolu Agency, 15.10.2014



Hundreds of Hong Kong police in riot gear cleared pro-democracy protesters from a major road of the Admiralty protest site early Wednesday morning in some of the most violent clashes since the mass movement was launched 18 days ago.

At around 03.00 local time (22.00 Tuesday Turkish time), police used pepper spray to clear demonstrators from a road next to the city's government headquarters. Live television footage showed police wrestling protesters to the ground and then arresting them. Officers also tore down barricades that had been erected over the last two weeks.

As the barriers were taken down by police, the protesters erected fresh ones behind their lines. However, this has resulted in the total area of the protests shrinking by around a fifth since police started removing the makeshift barricades Monday. Police officers are still able to walk freely among the protesters. Police said 45 protesters had been detained on charges of unlawful assembly and obstruction. Many protesters were taken away with their hands tied behind their backs with temporary handcuffs as police with bolt-cutters and riot shields moved to clear barricades blocking Lung Wo Road near the offices of Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying. The demonstrators are protesting against Beijing's decision to restrict election reforms in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory.

Video footage broadcast by local television station TVB appeared to show a group of six plainclothes police officers carrying a handcuffed protester to a corner they apparently thought was out of sight. They then dropped him on the ground and appeared to kick, knee and stomp on him. The South China Morning Post identified the man as Ken Tsang, a member of the pro-democracy Civic Party. A few hours after the video footage was aired, photographs emerged of Tsang with bruises to his face and back. Civic Party lawmaker Dennis Kwok said Tsang had been taken under police escort to Ruttonjee Hospital for medical assessment, the Post reported. Kwok, who acts as Tsang's lawyer, said Tsang had been punched and slapped again at a police station.

Independent Police Complaints Council member Eric Cheung Tat-ming said the footage was potential evidence of police committing a criminal act. Speaking to journalists before a Legislative Council meeting, Secretary for Security Lai Tung-kwok said the officers concerned had been “transferred away from the current positions.”

In a statement, police said the footage that showed officers “suspected of using excessive force” and promised an impartial investigation. The Occupy Central with Love and Peace protest organizers condemned alleged police violence. A statement from the group said: “OCLP strongly condemns such behavior, which smacks of extrajudicial punishment and demands authorities investigate it. The public must not be left with the impression that selective law enforcement and collusion among public officers is condoned.” Occupy added that attacking non-violent protesters was a breach of Leung’s promise that police would show “maximum tolerance.”

Announcements & Reports

► *Struggle against Isis, border crossings and Turkey*

Source : ORSAM

Weblink : http://www.orsam.org.tr/en/enUploads/Article/Files/2014921_policybrief11ing.pdf

► *Technology vision 2014*

Source : Accenture Global

Weblink : http://www.orsam.org.tr/en/enUploads/Article/Files/2014921_policybrief11ing.pdf

► *Outlook for financial services*

Source : Ernst and Young

Weblink : [http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY-FS-Eurozone-Spring-2014/\\$FILE/EY-FS-Eurozone-Spring-2014.pdf](http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY-FS-Eurozone-Spring-2014/$FILE/EY-FS-Eurozone-Spring-2014.pdf)

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Source : Chatham House

Weblink : http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/field/field_document/20141013LondonConference.pdf

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Source : CSIS

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Source : Bruegel

Weblink : <http://www.bruegel.org/publications/publication-detail/publication/853-developing-an-underlying-inflation-gauge-for-china/>

Upcoming Events

► *Track-Two Diplomacy Toward An Israeli-Palestinian Solution*

Date : 13 October 2014

Place : Texas – USA

Website : <http://bakerinstitute.org/events/1666/>

► *Europe’s Strategic Choices: Building Prosperity and Security*

Date : 17 – 19 October 2014

Place : Berlin - Germany

Website : <http://www.chathamhouse.org/Berlin2014>

► *The New Shape of Banking: Regulation, Reform and Resilience*

Date : 20 October 2014

Place : Berlin - Germany

Website : <http://www.chathamhouse.org/Banking>

► *New Directions of U.S. Water Policy*

Date : 20 October 2014
Place : Stanford – USA
Website : http://www.hamiltonproject.org/events/new_directions_for_u.s._water_policy/

► *Beyond Sectarianism: The New Middle East Cold War*

Date : 21 October 2014
Place : Doha - Qatar
Website : <http://www.brookings.edu/events/2014/10/21-beyond-sectarianism-cold-war>

► *7th International Energy Congress Expo*

Date : 24 - 25 November 2014
Place : Ankara - Turkey
Website : <http://www.energy-congress.com>

► *The Comprehensive Assessment, the ECBs' New Role and Limits of a Common Supervision in the EU*

Date : 30 October 2014
Place : Berlin – Germany
Website : <http://www.bruegel.org/nc/events/event-detail/event/461-the-comprehensive-assessment-the-ecbs-new-role-and-limits-of-a-common-supervision-in-the-eu/>

► *The New EU Political Cycle: Addressing the Growth Agenda*

Date : 12 – 13 November 2014
Place : Bratislava – Slovakia
Website : <http://www.bruegel.org/nc/events/event-detail/event/464-the-new-eu-political-cycle-addressing-the-growth-agenda/>

► *Food Security: Mapping Risks, Building Resilience*

Date : 01 – 02 December 2014
Place : London – United Kingdom
Website : <http://www.chathamhouse.org/foodsecurity2014>

► *11th Asia Europe Economic Forum*

Date : 05 December 2014
Place : Tokyo – Japan
Website : <http://www.bruegel.org/nc/events/event-detail/view/460/>

► *18th Middle East Iron and Steel Conference*

Date : 08 December 2014
Place : Dubai – United Arab Emirates
Website : <http://www.woodmac.com/public/events>

► *Security and Defense*

Date : 23 February 2015
Place : London – United Kingdom
Website : <http://www.chathamhouse.org/Defence2015>

► *Diversifying MENA Economies*

Date : 02 - 03 March 2015
Place : London – United Kingdom
Website : <http://www.chathamhouse.org/conferences/MENA-Economies>