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# Erdogan asks Muslims: ‘Visit Al Aqsa’

*Turkish president urges Muslims around world to protect Al Aqsa*

By Emin Avundukluoglu

ANKARA - President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has urged Muslims to play their role in protecting the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. Anger has spilled across the West Bank since last week when Israel shut the Al-Aqsa Mosque, venerated by Muslims and Jews -- who call the site Temple Mount -- following a deadly shootout. The mosque was reopened after two days, with Israel installing metal detectors and cameras at its gates. Three Palestinians were killed Friday in protests against the Israeli measures around the holy site. Three Israelis were also killed in an attack in a settlement in the West Bank. Addressing the Justice and Development (AK) Party's parliamentary group meeting in Ankara on Tuesday, Erdogan

said: "When Israeli soldiers carelessly pollute the grounds of Al-Aqsa with their combat boots by using simple issues as a pretext and then easily spill blood there, the reason [they are able to do that] is we [Muslims] have not done enough to stake our claim over Jerusalem." Erdogan said protection of the Muslim holy site is not a just a matter about whether it is possible to do more to protect but a matter of faith. "Those who are able to should visit Al-Aqsa. For those who cannot visit Al-Aqsa should send aid to our brothers there." Israel's security cabinet decided late Monday to remove the metal detectors. A statement released after the meeting said 100 million Israeli shekels would be allocated for a new surveillance system using "smart checks" based on advanced technology. Jerusalem is sacred to Muslims, Jews and Christians... [MORE DETAILS](#)



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan / Anadolu Agency Photo By Yasin Bulbul



## Palestinians wait as Aqsa changes assessed

*Despite removal of metal detectors, Jerusalem leaders want review of security measures before entering mosque*

By Kaamil Ahmed

JERUSALEM - With sandwiches, coffee and a dose of patience, Palestinians began their morning waiting at the gates of Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque for a decision on whether they could enter the holy site after more than a week protesting at its threshold. The metal detectors they have been boycotting, installed after a deadly shootout earlier this month,

were removed in the early hours of Tuesday but local residents and mosque officials have raised concerns about work done by Israeli authorities at the same time. "Worshippers will not enter Al-Aqsa until we receive the Waqf [Islamic foundation] report on the situation, and we will decide accordingly," Sheikh Ikrena Sabri, an imam of Al-Aqsa, told Anadolu Agency after an initial meeting of Jerusalem religious authorities.

After more than a week of non-violent protests outside the gates of Al-Aqsa, led by the Waqf, which manages the holy site according to historical agreements, Israel's security cabinet decided to remove the metal detectors but settled on a new 100 million shekel plan for security measures using "advanced technology". The measures were introduced after two Israeli police officers and three suspected... [MORE DETAILS](#)

## Germany ‘turning blind eye’ to concerns



By Satuk Bugra Kutlugun

ANKARA - A relationship based on trust, mutual interest, equality and respect is necessary between Turkey and Europe, presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin wrote on Tuesday. "Turks, Germans and Europeans have to work hard to avoid irrational attitudes and irresponsible policies that end up hurting everyone," Kalin, a top aide to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, wrote in a column for Turkey's Daily Sabah newspaper, headlined "Turkey, Germany, Europe quo vadis?" He said German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel

announced a major policy change on Turkey instead of a positive climate to emerge last week. "Where did this come from? What lies behind it?" German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel announced in a news conference last Thursday it would not encourage German businesses to invest in Turkey, in an apparent attempt to increase pressure on Ankara to release German citizen Peter Steudtner. Germany also issued new travel warnings for its citizens wishing to visit Turkey. "Two recent incidents are mentioned as a possible cause for this policy shift," Kalin said. "The first is the detention of a German citizen in Turkey for allegedly being involved in unlawful acts. The second is the claim that Turkey is investigating German companies in Turkey as part of the ongoing Gulenist Terror Group [FETO] investigation. "The German government went so far as to claim that German citizens and companies are not safe in Turkey. Both charges are baseless." Steudtner was among 10 people arrested in a police raid during a meeting in Buyukada... [MORE DETAILS](#)



## Nepotism in Iran's political system

*Jubilation remains somewhat incomplete mainly because the senior leadership of Daesh has never been captured*

By Selim Celal

ISTANBUL - On 15 July, Iranian judicial officials detained Hassan Faridoon, the brother of the Islamic Republic of Iran's president, also his special advisor. He is facing allegations of financial irregularities. Later on, he was reportedly dispatched to a hospital due to a health condition, from where he was released. The

whole episode took only 24 hours. It is too early to argue and prove that Faridoon was quickly released because Rouhani threatened the establishment in order to secure the release of his brother. It is also too early to argue that Rouhani entered into a secret deal with the establishment to secure his brother's release. However, what can be surmised is that Faridoon was not released due to his health condition, as there are several political and non-political prisoners with quite serious medical conditions... [MORE DETAILS](#)

## Pentagon dodges SDF ‘rebranding’ question



By Safvan Allahverdi

WASHINGTON - The Pentagon on Monday eluded question regarding statements by a spokesman who said the U.S. urged the terrorist PKK/PYD organization to "rebrand" itself to make the group more acceptable to Turkey. "I don't have anything on that," was spokesman Jeff Davis' response to an Anadolu Agency question about the comments delivered last week by Army Gen. Raymond Thomas at a security conference. Thomas said the U.S. urged its main Syrian ally to rebrand itself as the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) to avoid Turkish concerns

and to give the terror group a voice in Syria's future. But Davis attempted to gloss over the issue Monday. "We have worked very hard to change the ethnic composition of the SDF and when it started it was primarily ethnic Kurds," Davis said, claiming the split is now "50/50" between Kurds and Sunni Arabs. Davis claimed the SDF is a "multi-ethnic representative force" and "the most effective fighting force" in Syria in terms of getting towns and cities liberated from Daesh. The U.S. has supported the PKK/PYD, along with several other Arab militia groups under the umbrella... [MORE DETAILS](#)

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