

SMALL TURKISH PROVINCE SHOWS BIG HEART TOWARDS SYRIANS



"We believe in our army, and in our state." Amid sounds of artillery invading the atmosphere of the city of Kilis, just a few miles from the Syrian border, Halil Deli, 36, taxi driver for five years now, support the Turkish army's shelling in Syria. But he quickly shows concern not only for his family but for the city's future. "My wife cannot sleep in peace due to sounds of artillery all night," Deli says. "Since the rocket fired from the Syrian side of the border hit two public school here, every morning I feel stressed for my two daughters when they go school." >> **TURKEY**

ISTANBUL AMONG EUROPE'S 'BIG FOUR' MEGACITIES: REPORT



Istanbul now sits firmly among Europe's "Big Four" megacities alongside London, Moscow and Paris, according to an international report. JLL, a global financial and professional services firm that specializes in commercial real estate services and investment management, made the revelation in a report titled "Istanbul on the World Stage" Friday. According to the report, Istanbul has been the most improved "emerging world city over the past five years on a range of performance indicators and its economic fundamentals are stronger than many of its ... **CULTURE AND ART**

FOOTBALL: GALATASARAY EDGE OUT SEVEN-MAN TRABZONSPOR



Istanbul based football heavyweights Galatasaray barely beat seven-man Trabzonspor 2-1 in an eventful Spor Toto Super Lig clash at Turk Telekom Arena late Sunday. Visitors Trabzonspor took the lead in the first half as Swedish winger Erkan Zengin scored from a penalty kick in the 25th minute. In 59', Trabzonspor midfielder Ozer Hurmaci was sent off after a sliding tackle against the Lions' left back Lionel Carole. Dominant through much of the game, Galatasaray equalized in the 63th minute with their German star, Lukas Podolski. >> **SPORTS**

WEATHER / ANKARA

Monday
CLOUDY
10°C

Tuesday
CLOUDY
14°C



ANADOLU POST

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Three abducted journalists freed in Turkey

Journalists working for Anadolu Agency released after being held for over 48 hours



Three journalists working for Anadolu Agency, kidnapped by PKK terrorists for over 48 hours in Turkey's southeastern Mardin province, have been freed. Anadolu Agency correspondent Rauf Maltas (31), photojournalist Onur Coban (36) and cameraman Kenan Yesilyurt (26) were assigned last week to Mardin's Nusaybin district to cover stories in the region. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu separately talked to the trio of journalists by phone following their release.

The officials were also briefed by Anadolu Agency Director General Senol Kazanci regarding the journalists' health.

"We wish a speedy recovery for our friends," Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmus told reporters in northern Ordu province. Kurtulmus went on to voice hope the trio would soon be able return to work. The PKK -- considered a terrorist organization also by the U.S. and the EU -- resumed its 30-year armed campaign against the Turkish state in late July 2015. >> **MORE DETAILS**

Erdogan vows to expand fight against terror threats



Turkey reserves the right to carry out every kind of operations at home and abroad against terror threats, the country's president said on Saturday. "Turkey will use its right to expand its rules of engagement beyond [responding to] actual attacks against it and to encompass all terror threats, including PYD and Daesh in particular," Recep Tayyip Erdogan said at a UNESCO meeting in Istanbul. His remarks came after a

suicide bomb attack in the Turkish capital Ankara killed 28 people and wounded 81 others on Feb. 17.

The Turkish government revealed that the Ankara attack was carried out jointly by a YPG member -- a Syrian national -- and PKK members. The YPG is the military wing of the PYD, which is the Syrian affiliate of the PKK. Ankara considers all three groups to be terrorist outfits, while the U.S. designates only the PKK as such and regards the YPG as a "reliable partner" in northern Syria. In his remarks Saturday, Erdogan noted: "Nobody can limit Turkey in using its right of self-defense against terror attacks targeting the country." >> **MORE DETAILS**

Turkish PM reveals security plan in wake of Ankara bomb



The Turkish prime minister has revealed efforts for a "comprehensive" action plan to enhance security after the capital was struck by a terrorist attack that killed 28 people earlier this week. Following his visit Saturday to Ankara Governor's Office in the wake of Wednesday's attack, Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said his government would introduce a new security concept "unique to capital Ankara".

"Aside from security measures across Turkey, a new and special security mechanism and an action plan that accounts for Ankara's unique properties will be prepared," Davutoglu told reporters. >> **MORE DETAILS**

Turkish FM: Russia used Syria talks as smoke screen

Moscow 'biggest obstacle' to resolving five-year conflict, Cavusoglu says



In an interview with Italian daily La Stampa on Sunday, Cavusoglu termed Moscow as the "biggest obstacle" to resolving the five-year crisis. "Russia used the Geneva talks as a smoke screen in order to intensify their airstrikes

in Syria," the minister said. The UN suspended peace talks in Geneva on Feb. 3 "due to intensified fighting" in Syria, according to the UN envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura. Talks are now scheduled to resume on Feb. 25.

Russia continued to carry out airstrikes, reportedly killing more than 130 civilians, on the day of the talks.

"They [Russia] are targeting schools, bazaars, hospitals and places for civilians. (...) When we all take a look at these strikes, we can see that it [Russia] aims to undermine the process [talks]," Cavusoglu said.

Since Sept. 30 of last year, Russia -- a close ally of the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad regime -- targeted a number of civilian areas in Syria, according to U.S. officials.

While the Kremlin says the airstrikes hit positions held by the Daesh militant group, some members of the western NATO alliance

say Russia is targeting moderate opposition groups opposed to Assad.

Syria has remained locked in a vicious civil war since early 2011, when the regime cracked down on pro-democracy protests with unexpected ferocity.

Since then, more than 250,000 people have been killed across the country and more than 10 million displaced, according to UN figures.

With 2.62 million Syrian war survivors and 26 different camps, the conflict has made Turkey the world's biggest host of refugees.

>> **MORE DETAILS**

Support for terror groups worsening Syria war: Turkey

Moscow 'biggest obstacle' to resolving five-year conflict, Cavusoglu says

Turkey's presidential spokesman has said supporting terrorist groups will make the situation in war-torn Syria even worse.

Writing in Turkey's Daily Sabah newspaper Saturday, Ibrahim Kalin said: "Those who are supporting terrorist groups in the name of fighting Daesh are only contributing to an already-worsening situation."

He also said: "The YPG continues to manipulate the war in Syria to its advantage. In the name of fighting Daesh, it is acting as a client organization to the U.S., Russia and the regime of Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad regime at once."

Kalin also said with the help of Russian air support and U.S. supplies, the YPG had moved into Syrian opposition-controlled areas.

His comments come after a deadly blast in the Turkish capital of Ankara killed 28 people and wounded 81 others on Feb. 17.

"It is now established that the attack was carried out by the YPG. The suicide bomber Salih Nekar entered Turkey in 2014 from the Hasakah-Qamishli region under the control of the PYD," wrote Kalin.

"Turkey has rightly reacted to the ongoing U.S. support to YPG," Kalin added.

"The anti-Daesh strategy is thus faced with a conundrum: While the YPG at-



tacks the other opposition groups fighting against Daesh, Daesh remains as powerful and operational as before and the Assad regime gets stronger by the day," Kalin said.

The dynamics of the links between Turkey, the U.S. and the PYD has placed a strain on the relationship between Ankara and Washington.

The Obama administration has lauded Ankara's efforts in the fight against Daesh. But Turkey has recently pressed the U.S. on its support for the YPG and has even suggested the Americans choose between its NATO ally and a group Ankara considers a terrorist outfit.

"Even if Daesh is defeated, which is unlikely with the current strategy of attacking Daesh and letting the Assad regime get away with its war crimes, the war in Syria will not end because the Assad regime backed by Russia and Iran will continue to fight against the Syrian people. "This means more carnage, more war crimes and more refugees," wrote Kalin. >> **MORE DETAILS**

Turkey to enhance border security measures nea Syria

Defense minister says state will ensure safety of citizens living in Turkey



Turkey will enhance high-tech security measures on its border with Syria, Defense Minister Ismet Yilmaz said Sunday.

Speaking to media following in the southern province of Kilis, Yilmaz said security efforts to protect the border against any threat from Syria would be completed by the end of 2016.

"The efforts that have been launched in a 911 kilometer [566-mile] field are underway and a 250-km part of it will be comple-

ed in the midst of 2016," said the defense minister.

Dubbing the efforts to secure the border an "endless" process, the minister noted that security would improve with technology every year.

"We will ensure the safety of citizens living in Republic of Turkey with the erection of walls, wire fences on the walls, surveillance cameras, drones, balloon systems and sensors," Yilmaz added.

Asked whether the Turkish shelling of YPG positions would continue or not, the minister said Turkey would not refrain from anything to protect itself.

The Turkish army shelled the Syrian side of the frontier as of 7:00 p.m. local time [1700GMT] on Friday. >> **MORE DETAILS**

Turkish minister laments 'EU injustice' over refugees

All hell broke loose when Syrians arrived, customs minister says of EU refugee response, criticizing EU states for overreacting while asking Ankara to do more



Turkey's minister of customs and trade has accused European states of committing an "injustice" against Turkey by calling on the country to do more while they struggle to cope with a fraction of what Ankara has shouldered in refugee response. "We thought it a source of richness to welcome our Syrian brothers and sisters to Turkey. But in a few of those European states, all hell broke loose when Syrians arrived," Bulent Tufenkci

told a local AK Party audience in Kilis province on Saturday. "Those who can't say 'stop' to Russia's atrocities at the United Nations are asking us, 'why are you closing the door?' We are not, the doors of our hearts are always open. We are already fully taking care of accommodation needs," Tufenkci said.

With 2.62 million Syrian war survivors and 26 different camps, Turkey has become the country hosting the biggest number of refugees in the world. With Russia- and regime-backed military pressure on Aleppo, the numbers are expected to rise. As many as 600,000 refugees might soon arrive at the Turkish border "in a worst case scenario," Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmus said on Feb. 8. >> **MORE DETAILS**

14 sent to court over Ankara bomb attack



Fourteen people detained as part of an investigation into the Feb. 17 suicide bombing in the Turkish capital have been sent to court. Seven others were released, according to judicial sources. The detainees' courthouse procedures, including a questioning by public prosecutors, lasted for 13 hours, the sources said.

A total of 21 people were detained across Turkey on suspicion of involvement in Wednesday's bomb attack that targeted a convoy of military-owned vehicles in Ankara, killing 28 people and leaving 81 others injured. >> **MORE DETAILS**

Three soldiers martyred in southeast Turkey

At least three Turkish soldiers were martyred in ongoing operations against the terrorist PKK organization in southeastern Turkey, the military said Sunday. The Turkish General Staff said in a statement that one soldier, who was heavily injured in an armed attack by the members of the separatist terrorist organization... >> **MORE DETAILS**