

THE FIGHT AGAINST IS

Kerry seeks Cairo's support for 'war' on jihadists

AFP, Cairo

US Secretary of State John Kerry said Saturday Egypt was on the frontline against "terrorism" after he met its leadership to garner support to fight Islamic State jihadists in Iraq and Syria. Egypt's formidable army is unlikely to take part in a military coalition against IS, but has closely cooperated with the United States on counter-terrorism.

US will not coordinate air strikes with Syria: Kerry

AFP, Washington

The United States will not coordinate air attacks on Islamic State militants with Syria but will seek to ensure their forces do not come into conflict, US Secretary of State John Kerry said in an interview aired yesterday.

Paris conference aims to divide up tasks in IS fight

AFP Paris

The international conference in Paris today that gathers some 20 countries from the anti-Islamic State coalition will seek to divide up the roles between nations with often diverging interests. However, any decisions taken at the conference, jointly hosted by French President Francois Hollande and Iraqi President Fuad Masum, will not necessarily be made public, a French diplomatic source stressed.

Iran says Paris anti-jihadist meeting just for show

AFP, Tehran

Iran said Saturday it has no wish to attend an international conference in Paris on fighting the jihadist Islamic State group, dismissing the meeting as just for show. "What would interest Iran is a real fight against terrorism in the region and around the world, not this selective one," deputy foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian told state television.

Australia commits 600 troops to anti-IS campaign

AFP, Sydney

Prime Minister Tony Abbott said yesterday Australia would deploy 600 troops to the United Arab Emirates to join the US-led international coalition gearing up for war against Islamic State jihadists. Abbott said the deployment of about "400 air personnel and about 200 military personnel" followed a formal request from Washington for Australia to contribute to the international coalition against the rampaging Islamist group.

Germany sending 40 soldiers to Iraqi Kurdistan

AFP, Berlin

Berlin is preparing to send around 40 soldiers to northern Iraq to train Kurdish fighters battling against militants from the Islamic State, the German army said on Saturday. Following a decision last month by the German government to provide Kurdish peshmerga forces with weapons, Berlin's defence ministry said it had sent six soldiers to its consulate in Arbil, northern Iraq, to "coordinate" joint training exercises.

Indonesia arrests four Turks over Islamic State link

AFP, Jakarta

Indonesia's anti-terrorism police have arrested four Turks suspected of being linked to the Islamic State jihadist group, a spokesman said yesterday. The elite Detachment 88 police squad arrested the men, along with three Indonesians, after tailing their car on Saturday in central Sulawesi district of Poso, a known hotbed for militant activity, Boy Rafli Amar told AFP.



An image grab taken from a video released by the Islamic State and identified by private terrorism monitor SITE Intelligence Group on Friday purportedly shows British aid worker David Haines dressed in orange and on his knees in a desert landscape speaking to the camera before being beheaded by a masked militant. This would be the third such execution in recent weeks, after two US journalists taken hostage in Syria were shown murdered.

PHOTO: AFP

Haines video similar to Sotloff and Foley killings

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE

A video purporting to show the murder of British aid worker David Haines was released by Islamic State militants on Saturday. It bears noticeable similarities to the videos released in recent weeks, depicting the beheadings of US journalists Steven Sotloff and James Foley.

Location

The David Haines video appears to have been recorded on an arid and deserted hill, very similar to the landscape in the Sotloff and Foley videos. Elliot Higgins, a British weapons expert and founder of online journalism site Bellingcat, claims to have pinpointed the site of James Foley's killing to the hills south of Raqqa, in Syria.

Timeline

It is not yet clear when the video was filmed. Haine's hair appears to have grown since his appearance at the

end of the Sotloff beheading video, so his may have been recorded at a later date. Sotloff's hair had grown since his initial appearance in the James Foley video.

Killing

Throughout the video, Haines appears kneeling, next to his killer. Much like Sotloff and Foley before him, Haines is pictured wearing an orange jumpsuit. In contrast, the killer is wearing a black outfit identical to that worn by the killer in both the Sotloff and Foley videos. Only his eyes and hands are visible. He is also holding a hand knife, similar to the one seen in the other videos.

Haines's killer speaks with a marked British accent, sounding very similar to the militant in the Sotloff and Foley videos. Haines's killer is shown to be left-handed, as were the killers in both previous videos.

All three videos begin with the

hostages making speeches to the camera. Haines addressed David Cameron, whereas Sotloff and Foley both addressed Obama and criticised US action against Isis.

Production/edits

All three videos are structured very similarly. Though roughly edited, the Haines video begins with a clip of David Cameron speaking about the UK decision to arm the Kurds to fight Isis. Both the Sotloff and Foley videos began with footage of Obama.

All three videos have similar production: Arabic subtitles are used throughout, title cards have similar font and the various components are edited together in a similar fashion.

At the end of the Haines video, a fourth hostage, a Briton, appears kneeling and being threatened by the killer. Haines appeared at the end of the Sotloff video and Sotloff was paraded at the end of the Foley video.

NEWSIN brief

Pilot turns Malaysia Airlines flight around after defect

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

A Malaysia Airlines flight was forced to turn around due to an auto-pilot defect, landing safely early yesterday, said the carrier already reeling from the loss of two planes this year. Flight MH198 from Kuala Lumpur to Hyderabad in India departed late Saturday, but the Boeing 737-800 turned back due to an auto-pilot defect. It landed back in Malaysia's capital almost four hours later after circling to burn fuel in the air.

Pak flood rescue boat capsizes; at least 11 dead

AFP, Multan

At least eleven people including a bridegroom and two children drowned yesterday when a rescue boat carrying a wedding party capsized in flood-hit central Pakistan, officials said, with the death toll feared to rise. The boat, which was carrying at least 35 people, went down in rough waters in the Muzaffargarh district of central Punjab province, they said.

Fresh rain hampers rescue bid in flood-ravaged Kashmir

AFP, Srinagar

Fresh rain hampered rescue operations in Indian Kashmir yesterday, a week after deadly floods swamped the Himalayan region, with medics and survivors describing nightmarish conditions in the devastated city of Srinagar. The floods and landslides have now claimed at least 490 lives in India and neighbouring Pakistan, and rescuers are struggling to cope with the scale of the disaster.



Armed pro-Russian militants patrol a road near a front line where shelling continues between pro-Russian forces and the Ukrainian army in the village of Olenivka some 30 kms south of Donetsk on the way to Mariupol, eastern Ukraine. The Ukrainian government accused pro-Russian separatists of threatening a tenuous push for peace as booming rounds of heavy artillery fire echoed across the insurgent stronghold of Donetsk.

PHOTO: AFP

Pak protest talks jammed after arrests

AFP, Islamabad

Talks to end a month long sit-in by anti-government protesters in Pakistan were deadlocked Saturday after authorities arrested dozens of demonstrators, some of whom were accused of storming a TV station.

Interior minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan confirmed that the government had detained several people for storming the state run Pakistan Television building earlier this month.

The arrests prompted Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf party to cancel talks aimed at ending the crisis.

Tahir-ul-Qadri, chief of his own Pakistan Awami Tehreek party also announced he had suspended negotiations alleging that 12 of his personal guards were also arrested.

Ex-Indian MPs left without power, water

AFP, New Delhi

New Delhi authorities cut power and water supplies to homes of former ministers and lawmakers, including India's last federal civil aviation minister, after they ignored repeated eviction warnings, reports said yesterday.

Congress Party ally and former civil aviation minister Ajit Singh, along with ex-Congress lawmakers like cricketer-turned-politician Mohammad Azharuddin, refused to leave despite a crushing election defeat at the hands of the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party in May.

An anonymous official was quoted by the Times of India as saying that power and water supplies were disconnected from 30 houses, still occupied by the ex-MPs and former ministers, despite notices to vacate the premises.

WORLD REACTIONS

Haines Beheading

Scottish-born Haines, 44, was taken hostage in Syria in March 2013 and was threatened in a video released this month depicting the beheading by IS militants of the US journalist Steven Sotloff.

Haines had been working for the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED), an international relief charity, and was previous involved in humanitarian work in the Balkans, parts of Africa and elsewhere in the Middle East.

US 'shoulder to shoulder' with Britain

AFP, Washington

US President Barack Obama expressed solidarity Saturday with ally Britain, after British captive David Haines was murdered by Islamic State militants claiming revenge for the countries' campaign against them. "The United States stands shoulder to shoulder tonight with our close friend and ally (Britain) in grief and resolve," Obama said in a statement.

Berlin condemns beheading as 'barbaric violence'

AFP, Berlin

Germany yesterday condemned the execution of British aid worker David Haines by an Islamic State militant as a "heinous act of barbaric violence". Expressing her horror to British Prime Minister David Cameron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel added that "the unjustifiable act by terrorists must be punished", according to a statement from her office.

Execution of British hostage 'heinous': France

AFP, Paris

France yesterday condemned the Islamic State's "heinous murder" of British hostage David Haines, urging international action against the jihadist group. "The heinous killing of David Haines is yet another demonstration of why the international community must mobilise against (the Islamic State), a cowardly and abject organisation," the French presidency said in a statement. President Francois Hollande's office also expressed France's solidarity with Haines' family and Britain.

'KNIFE-EDGE' SCOTLAND REFERENDUM

Rivals bid for votes

AFP, Glasgow

Campaigners for and against Scottish independence scrambled for votes yesterday ahead of a historic referendum, as a religious leader prayed for harmony after polls showed Scots were almost evenly split.

The Church of Scotland's moderator John Chalmers called for Scots to "live in harmony with one another" whatever the result and hailed the feverish run-up to Thursday's vote as "a wonderful democratic concerto".

"All of those who will vote 'Yes' and all of those who will vote 'No' need to remember that we belong together in the same Scotland," he told worshippers at St Mary's Episcopal Church in Edinburgh in a sermon broadcast on BBC radio nationwide.

"We cannot afford to lose the momentum and interest in civic life which this campaign has generated," said Chalmers, moderator of the general assembly of the Church, the largest religious group in Scotland.

The pro-union camp has been far ahead in the polls for many months, but the difference has narrowed in recent weeks and a raft of surveys over the weekend indicated that Thursday's vote could go either way.

A Survation poll on Saturday showed the "No" camp at 47 percent and the "Yes" at 40.8 percent, with 9.0 percent undecided and 3.2 percent unwilling to say.

An Opinium survey for yesterday's Observer newspaper put "No" at 47.7 percent and "Yes" at 42.3 percent, with 10 percent not voting or not sure if they would.

An ICM online poll for the Sunday Telegraph placed the pro-independence campaign at 49 percent and the pro-UK at 42 percent with 9.0 percent undecided, but a senior pollster warned the sample size was too small.

"The polls show that the referendum is on a knife-edge. There is everything to play for," said Blair Jenkins, chief executive of the "Yes Scotland" campaign.



Remembering Amy

Statue unveiled to remember singer's struggle

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE

A lifesize statue of Amy Winehouse has been unveiled in London on what would have been the singer's 31st birthday.

Fans and relatives attended the unveiling in Camden, north London, where Winehouse lived before her death in July 2011 after a public struggle with addiction.

The 175cm bronze statue in Stables Market portrays Winehouse in high heels and with her trademark beehive hairdo. It was sculpted by the London-based artist Scott Eaton after he was introduced to Winehouse's father, Mitch.

Eaton said: "The pose had to capture Amy's attitude and strength, but also give subtle hints of insecurity. The hand on the hip, the turn of the head, the grabbing of the skirt, the turned in foot – these are all small elements that contribute to the personality of the piece."

Mitch Winehouse said seeing the statue was "incredibly emotional", and Eaton had done an amazing job in capturing his daughter's likeness.

"It is like stopping her in a beautiful moment in time. We really hope Amy's fans love the statue," he said.

Following her death, the family set up the Amy Winehouse Foundation to help tackle the impact of drugs and alcohol misuse on young people.