

Aylan's aunt urges EU to 'open heart'

AFP, Brussels

The aunt of three-year-old Syrian boy Aylan Kurdi whose drowning off Turkey shocked the world visited Brussels yesterday and tearfully urged the EU to adopt an emergency plan to redistribute refugees.

"Open your heart and take action and come up with a shared plan -- that's why I'm here, to honor my brother's family," Teema Kurdi told a press conference outside European Union headquarters in Brussels.

"It's too late for Aylan and Ghalib and Rihana, but it's not too late for thousands of children and their families who risk everything trying to reach safe haven," said Teema, who flew in from her home in Canada.

Teema's brother Abdullah Kurdi buried his three-year-old son Aylan, and his other young son Ghalib and his wife Rihana in the Syrian flashpoint town of Kobane on September 4 after their flight to Europe on a boat ended in tragedy.

Teema Kurdi spoke with Jean Asselborn, Luxembourg's foreign minister, before he chairs an emergency EU meeting later yesterday on a plan to relocate 160,000 asylum seekers from Greece, Hungary and Italy.

"Instead of putting up fences, I appeal to Europe and the world's politicians to open their doors," Kurdi added.

Her visit was organised by the campaign group Avaaz, which circulated a petition with one million signatures calling for action.

"Things are not looking great, but what seemed impossible two weeks ago, with the people coming together, with the catalyst effect of Aylan's death, we already see change," Avaaz campaign director Luis Morago said.



German policemen watch as migrants are taken off a train at a border station in Freilassing yesterday. Inset, prison guards attach barbed wire on a freight train wagon, prepared to seal the border fence in Hungary at the train station in Roszke, Hungary. Refugees will continue to arrive in Germany despite the government's introduction of temporary border controls, a German spokesman said.

PHOTO: REUTERS



Twin suicide bomb blasts kill 26 in Syria

AFP, Damascus

At least 26 people including two children were killed yesterday in twin suicide car bomb attacks in the north-eastern Syrian city of Hasakeh, a monitor said.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said 13 civilians were killed in the two blasts, along with six members of the Kurdish security services and seven fighters from a pro-regime militia.

Syrian state television also reported the explosions, though it gave a toll of 20 dead and no breakdown of the toll.

The first blast hit a Kurdish checkpoint in the Khashman district of Hasakeh, where control is divided between Kurdish and regime forces.

That attack killed the six Kurdish forces along with 10 civilians, the Observatory said.

The second blast hit the Mahata district, apparently targeting a headquarters of the local National Defence Forces pro-regime militia.

Seven members of the force were killed along with three civilians, the Britain-based monitor said.

The group added that around 80 people had been wounded, and some of them were in serious condition.

Control of Hasakeh city -- and other parts of the province itself -- is divided between Kurdish militia and forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad.

The city has regularly been targeted by the Islamic State group, which controls some territory in Hasakeh province.

The group entered the city and seized several neighbourhoods in June, but was expelled a month later after battles involving both regime troops and Kurdish fighters.

More than 240,000 people have been killed in Syria since the conflict began in March 2011 with anti-government protests.

The fighting has since evolved into a complex civil war involving rebels, the regime, jihadists such as IS and Kurdish fighters.

Border-free Europe unravels in migrant crisis

AGENCIES

The two-decade-old era of border-free travel in Europe was unraveling yesterday as countries imposed controls on their frontiers in response to an unprecedented influx of migrants.

Germany's surprise decision to restore border controls on Sunday had a swift domino effect, forcing neighbors to shut their own frontiers as thousands of refugees pressed north and west across the continent.

Austria dispatched its military to guard its frontier with Hungary after thousands of migrants crossed the border on foot overnight, filling up temporary accommodation space in tents and railway station car parks, reports Reuters.

"If Germany carries out border controls, Austria must put strengthened border controls in place," Vice Chancellor Reinhold Mitterlehner told a joint news conference with Chancellor Werner Faymann. "We are doing that now."

He and Faymann said the army would be deployed in a supporting role.

"The focus of the support is on humanitarian help," Faymann said. "But it is also, and I would like to emphasize this, on supporting border controls where it is necessary." Slovakia said it too would shut its own borders with Austria and Hungary.

EU member states yesterday approved plans

ministry in Amman said.

Poland will impose border controls at the first sign of "any threat" amid Europe's worst migrant crisis since World War II, its prime minister said yesterday on the heels of border clampdowns by EU neighbours.

Meanwhile, many of the refugees flooding into Europe could be left in "legal limbo" as countries adopt different measures to address the migrant crisis facing the continent, the United Nations warned.

The UN refugee agency cautioned that "the combination of different, individual measures might create a situation where large numbers of refugees seeking in Europe the protection they are entitled to receive in line with international law, will find themselves moving around in legal limbo."

Many EU member states were reluctant to step up action against the traffickers for fear of getting embroiled in Libya, where rival factions have been fighting it out for control since the ouster of longtime strongman Moamer Kadhafi in 2011.

DEVELOPMENTS

- Germany, Austria, Slovakia introduce border checks
- EU backs military action against smugglers
- UN warns many refugees will be left in 'legal limbo'
- Cameron in Jordan for Syria refugee talks

for military action against people smugglers in the Mediterranean, seizing and if necessary destroying boats to break up the networks operating out of Libya, reports AFP.

British Prime Minister David Cameron arrived in Jordan yesterday for a visit to a Syrian refugee camp and talks with King Abdullah II, the foreign



The United Nations rights chief yesterday called for Europe and countries across the globe to establish "effective and principled migration governance" to address a multitude of migrant and refugee crises rocking the world.

"I implore decision-makers in Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, as well as Europe, to take swift action to establish effective and principled migration governance," Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said, opening the 30th session of the UN Human Rights Council.

His comments came as Europe scrambles to respond to the biggest movement of people since World War II.

More than 430,000 people have crossed the Mediterranean to Europe this year -- a majority of them fleeing war and repression in places like Syria.

Zeid hailed the demonstrations of support for the migrants by regular people in many European countries.

NEWS IN brief

Thai journo held for attitude adjustment

AFP, Bangkok

A prominent Thai journalist has been detained by the junta for so-called "attitude adjustment", a military official said yesterday, the latest deployment of the controversial tool used to stamp down on dissent. Pravit Rojanaphruk, a columnist for the English language Nation newspaper and one of the few remaining vocal critics of Thailand's military rulers, was summoned on Sunday and has been held incommunicado.

Sri Lanka to set up war reparations office

AFP, Geneva

Sri Lanka's new unity government is planning a range of measures to ensure reconciliation after decades of war, including creating an office for war reparations and a truth commission, Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera said yesterday. "The government of Sri Lanka recognises fully that the process of reconciliation involves addressing the broad areas of truth seeking, justice, reparations and non-recurrence," Samaraweera told the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva.

Five Saudi troops die on Yemen border

AFP, Riyadh

Five Saudi soldiers have died on the border with Yemen, the Saudi-led coalition said late on Sunday as forces inside Yemen began a major offensive against rebels. A coalition statement did not say how the army soldier and four Border Guard troops died in the kingdom's southern Najran region. The statement said they died "in the line of duty while protecting the nation's borders".



Smoke spews from the eruptive crater of Mount Aso as police officers and firefighters conduct an evacuation operation in Aso, Kumamoto prefecture, southwestern Japan, yesterday. The eruption causes a plume of black smoke 2 km high, but there were no immediate reports of damage or injuries.

PHOTO: REUTERS

We're inching towards peace with Russia

Says Ukraine's President Poroshenko

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Fifteen months into Ukraine's bitter conflict, some have begun to hope that the region's first effective ceasefire just might turn into a longer peace.

Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko, who says he has worked "every day and night" of those 15 months, is not ready to dream just yet. "This is not the end of the war, but instead a change in tactics," he told The Independent in a rare interview. "We know where the Russians and their proxies are still hiding their weapons, their tanks and their artillery -- for now the order has been given to cease fire, but for how long?"

Though the ceasefire has held for two weeks, other conditions of February's Minsk agreement have not yet been met. Meanwhile, Ukraine says it has drawn up its own "red lines" in collaboration with its Western partners. Among them is full and immediate access to rebel-held areas for international monitors, Poroshenko said.

Failure to deliver on these conditions would put the entire peace plan at risk, "with clear consequences -- and sanctions" for the Russian side. Poroshenko was adamant that "fake" elections in separatist-controlled areas, currently planned for October and November, would draw such a response.

Some reports have suggested Putin has begun to take a more emollient tone in phone calls, but Poroshenko was quick to dismiss any suggestion that personal relations between the two leaders might have improved significantly.



BANGKOK BLAST Key suspect fled to Turkey

BBC ONLINE

A key suspect in August's deadly Bangkok shrine bombing has fled to Turkey, Thai police say. They believe Abudusataer

Abudurehman, also known as Ishan, organised the bombing, which killed 20 people.

The 27-year-old from China's Xinjiang province is thought to have travelled to Istanbul at the end of August.

Over the weekend, an arrest warrant was issued for Abudurehman. Police say he left Thailand for Bangladesh on 16 August, one day before the bombing.

"He departed Dhaka on 30 August for Delhi... From Delhi, he continued his travel to Abu Dhabi, and from Abu Dhabi he travelled on 31 August to Istanbul. This is his final destination," a police spokesperson said.

Earlier Malaysian police announced the arrests of three people suspected of helping the bombers flee.

UK's Corbyn unveils 'unifying' shadow cabinet team

BBC ONLINE

Jeremy Corbyn has unveiled what he called a "unifying" new shadow cabinet, naming his left-wing ally John McDonnell as shadow chancellor.

Defeated leadership rival Andy Burnham is shadow home secretary, while Hilary Benn remains shadow foreign secretary. The most senior roles on the Labour front bench are all taken by men, leading to criticism from some MPs.

But half of the total posts went to women, including shadow defence, education, business and health.

Angela Eagle, the new shadow business secretary, was also named shadow first secretary of state and will stand in for Corbyn at Prime Minister's Questions when Prime Minister David Cameron is away.

Her twin sister, Maria Eagle, has been made shadow defence secretary.

Corbyn said his new line-up was a "strong combination of change and continuity", adding: "We have delivered a unifying, dynamic, inclusive new shadow cabinet which for the first time ever has a majority of women."

The appointment of McDonnell, a close friend of Corbyn who managed his campaign, is proving controversial among some

Labour MPs.

The Hayes and Harlington MP has previously faced criticism for telling a union event that he would "like to go back to the 1980s and assassinate Thatcher" and in 2003 said IRA terrorists should be "honoured" for taking part in their "armed struggle", while attending a gathering to commemorate the IRA hunger striker Bobby Sands.

He previously said a Corbyn government would pledge to clear the budget deficit, "but not by hitting the poor".

Chris Bryant, who is the new shadow Commons leader, told BBC News he had been offered the job of shadow defence secretary but turned it down because he disagreed with Corbyn "about a lot of defence issues".

He predicted Corbyn's reign as Labour leader would be "bumpy ride", with most Labour MPs at odds with those who voted in the leadership contest.

Speaking on BBC Radio 4's Today programme, Benn defended Corbyn, who he said had won a "thumping" victory in the leadership election, but declined to say he backed the appointment of McDonnell.

"This is the choice that Jeremy has made. I respect the choice that Jeremy has made as leader," he said.



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