



A child plays with a balloon in a makeshift camp at the Greek-Macedonian border near the Greek village of Idomeni, yesterday, where thousands of refugees and migrants wait to cross the border into Macedonia.

PHOTO: AFP

# ISIS's unborn army

Thousands of women being used to breed 'next generation of terrorist'

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Over 31,000 women are currently pregnant within the so-called Islamic State as the next generation of fighters are systematically created, a new report on children in the self-declared 'caliphate' has revealed.

Researchers for Quilliam, a London counter-extremism think tank, have investigated the way ISIS recruits children and trains them for jihad through indoctrination both at home and in school.

In their report, Children of Islamic State, which has been endorsed by the United Nations, they claim that as many as 50 children from the UK are growing up with jihad propaganda in the 'caliphate'.

It adds that ISIS views children as better and more lethal fighters than themselves. Rather than being converted into radical ideologies, they are "blank slate", indoctrinated into extreme values from birth. Techniques to normalise brutality include encouraging children to play football with decapitated heads.

The researchers said that boys learn from

a rigid ISIS curriculum, churning out memorised verses of the Quran and attend 'Jihadist training' - which involves shooting, martial arts and weaponry. Girls, however, are known as the 'pearls of the caliphate', are veiled, hidden, confined to the home, and taught to look after husbands.

Speaking to The Independent Nikita Malik, a senior researcher at Quilliam, said: "There's a systematic creation of the next generation of mujahideen - the next generation of fighters."

She added that the fact that 31,000 women are now pregnant "shows it's not being done randomly in any way, this is a very long-term preparation for these children to grow up with severe religious, theological and national indoctrination."

The extraordinary report on children in the 'caliphate' adds that from August 2015 to February 2016, 254 instances of children being used in Isis propaganda were recorded. In the last six months, such material has depicted 12 child executioners, with one participating in a public execution.



## Tunisia kills 28 jihadists

Imposes night-time curfew in town near Libyan border

AFP, Ben Guerdane

Tunisian forces killed 28 jihadists who attacked police and army posts near the Libyan border yesterday in a new spillover of violence that also saw four civilians killed.

Authorities ordered a nighttime curfew as troops deployed across the border town of Ben Guerdane to hunt for others involved in the coordinated pre-dawn attack.

It was the second deadly clash in the border area in less than a week as Tunisia battles to prevent the large number of its nationals who have joined the Islamic State (IS) jihadist group in Libya from returning to carry out attacks at home.

The jihadists have taken advantage of a power vacuum since the Nato-backed overthrow of longtime dictator Moamer Gaddafi in 2011 to set up bases in several areas of Libya, including the Sabratha area between Tripoli and the Tunisian border.

The government said that an army barracks and police and National Guard posts in Ben Guerdane came under simultaneous attack.

A soldier was also killed in the fighting and six wounded militants were captured, the defence ministry said.

Hospital official Abdelkrim Chafrouf said a 12-year-old was among the dead civilians, and two security agents were also killed.

An AFP correspondent reported that schools and offices in Ben Guerdane were closed and troops had taken up position on rooftops across the town. Authorities closed the border crossings with Libya. They also closed the main road north to the rest of Tunisia, the correspondent said.

# EU, Turkey summit extended

Ankara offers more help, makes more demands on bloc leaders

REUTERS, Brussels

Turkey offered the European Union greater help yesterday to stem a flood of migrants into Europe but demanded more money, faster accession talks and quicker visa-free travel for its citizens in exchange, diplomats said.

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said Ankara was willing to take back all non-Syrian migrants denied asylum in Europe as well as all those intercepted in its territorial waters, and to crack down harder on people smugglers, they said.

An emergency EU-Turkey summit, originally planned to last half a day, was extended to give Davutoglu a chance to present "new ideas" going beyond Ankara's commitments so far.

The 28 EU leaders would deliberate on his proposals in the afternoon and meet him again to discuss them over dinner, an EU official said.

"They (Turkey) are offering more and demanding more," he said after the first working session. A spokesman

for Davutoglu confirmed that there were new proposals but declined to discuss the substance.

Diplomats said that at a preparatory meeting with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte on Sunday night,

### MIGRANT CRISIS

EU leaders meet Turkish premier in Brussels

Summit may declare closed the Balkan route from Greece to Germany

Nato says ships can patrol Turkish, Greek waters

Davutoglu demanded more than the 3 billion euros (\$3.29 billion) earmarked so far to support Syrian refugees in Turkey. One source said Ankara was seeking 20 billion euros.

"I am sure these challenges will be solved through our cooperation and Turkey is ready to work with the EU," Davutoglu said on arrival for the

summit.

With tens of thousands of migrants stranded in Greece by closing borders, the summit may formally declare closed the Balkan route from Greece to Germany, although diplomats said Greek and German officials were fighting to soften the wording.

Leaders will pledge help to Athens cope with the backlog and seek assurances that Turkey, with Nato naval back-up in the Aegean, will stop people smugglers putting migrants to sea.

Nato said on Sunday a new naval force had approval to operate in Turkish and Greek waters to support a deal with Turkey to take back migrants halted in its waters and those who reach Greek islands but do not qualify for asylum.

British Prime Minister David Cameron said he was sending a naval force to the Aegean to join German and Canadian warships in the Nato force assisting the Greek and Turkish navies.

Some 33,000 migrants are bottled up in Greece and about 2,000 more have been arriving daily.

## POLITICAL TRANSITION IN MYANMAR

### Suu Kyi party rebuts 'fake' president release

AFP, Yangon

Suu Kyi's pro-democracy party yesterday denounced as "fake" a widely circulated letter purporting to reveal its choice of proxy Myanmar president, as speculation over who will take the role reaches fever pitch.

Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy (NLD) have kept a tight lid on who they want to become the president of Myanmar's first popularly elected government in decades, as they navigated the tense four-month political transition since November's landmark elections.

But with just days to go before they are set to announce their preferences on Thursday, and with Suu Kyi still blocked from the role by the junta-era constitution, a letter purporting to reveal the selecting emerged on social media on Sunday.

"That statement was not released by the NLD and was just a fake one. We hereby announce that such kind of fabrication is like committing a crime," the NLD said on its official Facebook account yesterday.

The purported document, which was stamped with an official NLD logo, listed current presidential favourite Htin Kyaw and ethnic Shan MP Hkun Tun Oo as the party's nominees for the roles of vice presidents.



Filipino male students stand in front of a banner as they wear women's shoes during a rally a day before the celebration of International Women's Day in Quezon City, Manila in the Philippines, yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

## BATTLE FOR US PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION

### Sanders wins Maine

BBC ONLINE

Bernie Sanders has beaten Hillary Clinton in the Maine caucuses, the latest contest in the battle to be the Democratic presidential candidate.

With 91% of the vote counted, Vermont Senator Sanders is polling 64%, while former Secretary of State Clinton has 36%. In the Republican race, Marco Rubio easily won Puerto Rico's primary, beating billionaire Donald Trump.

Clinton and Trump remain overall leaders in the nomination campaigns. Sunday night saw Clinton and Sanders clash on a number of issues in a CNN-hosted debate in Michigan.

They traded accusations on economy and trade, with Clinton saying her rival voted against a bailout of the US car industry in 2009. "I went with them. You did not. If everybody had voted the way he [Sanders] did, I believe the auto industry would have collapsed, taking four million jobs with it," Clinton said.

Sanders countered by saying: "I will be damned if it was the working people of this country who have to bail out the crooks on Wall Street."

Sanders described the measures taken at the time as "the Wall Street bailout where some of your [Clinton's] friends destroyed this economy".

In Saturday's round of voting, Sanders took two states - Kansas and Nebraska - but Clinton maintained her Democratic front-runner status after a big victory in Louisiana.



## Shakespeare's grave scanned for secrets

PTI, London

William Shakespeare's grave at a church in a town in the UK has been scanned using high-tech radar to unearth hidden secrets about the world's most famous playwright.

The probe forms part of the UK-wide commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the Bard's death, who lies buried at the Holy Trinity Church in Stratford-upon-Avon, the town of his birth in the West Midlands region of England.

Radar scans are most commonly used in graveyards to detect unmarked or previously unknown graves, allowing experts to find coffins and learn details about their size, shape and material they are made from.

In this case, it is believed documentary-makers were seeking to learn more about Shakespeare's life and family, the 'Daily Telegraph' reported.

The preliminary radar survey has already taken place, with final results due to be broadcast in a 'Channel 4' documentary in the coming months.

Shakespeare was buried in 1616, with the gravestone carrying the warning against any digging: "Good friend, for Jesus' sake forebears, To digg the dust enclosed here; Blesste be the man that spares the stones, And curst be he that moves my bones."

A spokesperson for Holy Trinity Church said: "We can confirm a scan of the grave has been completed."

## France defends Legion d'Honneur for Saudi prince

AFP, Paris

France's foreign minister yesterday defended the awarding of the Legion d'Honneur, the country's highest honour, to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, after it sparked harsh criticism on social media.

"It's a diplomatic tradition and I could tell you about many Legions d'Honneur that have been given," Jean-Marc Ayrault, the newly appointed foreign minister, told France Inter radio.

There was "nothing grandiose" about the ceremony, said Ayrault, adding that he could understand the negative reactions to the act.

President Francois Hollande awarded the honour to Nayef, who is also Saudi interior minister, during a visit on Friday for his "efforts in the fight against terrorism and extremism".

France did not initially announce the news, which was first revealed by Saudi press agency SPA.

Nayef is widely respected throughout the West for his efforts to combat violent extremism. He led a crackdown on al-Qaeda which waged a campaign of shootings and bombings against foreigners and Saudi security personnel in the kingdom between 2003 and 2007.

France has sold billions of euros worth of weapons to Riyadh, and sees Saudi Arabia as crucial to intelligence sharing about jihadist groups.

But critics point out that Saudi Arabia has spent decades funding the spread of its hardline Wahhabist teachings across the world, which is widely seen as underpinning the very jihadist threat that France is trying to defeat.



## NEWS IN brief

### Syria peace talks to begin on March 14

AFP, Damascus

The Syrian government has been invited to a new round of peace talks with the opposition in Geneva from March 14, a source close to the regime delegation said yesterday. "The delegation received an invitation on Sunday from the United Nations, asking us to take part in negotiations starting March 14 in Geneva," the source told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity.

### Taliban suicide blast in Pak court kills 13

AFP, Peshawar

A suicide bomber killed 13 people and injured 23 in northwest Pakistan yesterday, in an attack which the Taliban said was revenge for the hanging of an Islamist assassin last week. The bomber attacked as lawyers and litigants were arriving at a court complex during the morning rush hour in the town of Shabqadar.

### Gunman kills himself in Sydney siege

AFP, Sydney

A gunman who killed one person and injured two others was found dead yesterday after a lengthy police siege of an industrial estate in the Australian city of Sydney. Reports said the three were brothers and it was a domestic dispute rather than terrorism-related. The gunman appeared to have died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

### Turkish seizure of daily raises concern: Berlin

AFP, Abu Dhabi

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier yesterday voiced concern over the takeover by Turkish authorities of a leading newspaper and said the issue would be raised with Turkey's premier. Turkish police on Friday seized control of the top-selling Zaman, which opposes President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, drawing condemnation from the EU, US and Russia.

### India riots blamed on police failure

BBC ONLINE

An inquiry panel into the 2013 Hindu-Muslim riots in north India's Uttar Pradesh state has blamed intelligence and police failure for the violence. The 700-page report also blames the press for "exaggerated reports that fuelled violence" in Muzaffarnagar. However, it absolves the state government and other politicians for the riots which left 62 people dead.