

Saudi king condemns shooting

AFP, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia's King Salman has condemned the killing of 49 people at a gay nightclub in Florida, official media said yesterday.

"We condemn and denounce this disgraceful criminal act which is not accepted by religion or international norms and conventions," Salman said in a message of condolence.

Hillary Clinton on Monday accused Saudi Arabia and its neighbours of allowing radicalism to thrive.

"It is long past time for the Saudis, the Qataris, and the Kuwaitis and others to stop their citizens from funding extremist organisations," Clinton said in a speech. "And they should stop supporting radical schools and mosques around the world that have set too many young people on a path toward extremism," she added.



PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS



People take part in memorial services across the United States on Monday a day after a mass shooting at the Pulse gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, US. The attack triggered solidarity vigils across the world. US law enforcement officials are investigating reports that the man who killed 49 people at a gay nightclub in Orlando may have been gay himself, but not openly so, two officials said yesterday, with one describing the massacre as a possible "self-hate crime."

New twist in investigation

Orlando massacre witnesses say killer was a regular at the gay club; FBI says he was 'self-radicalized'; wife says she tried to talk him out of it

AGENCIES

US investigators yesterday worked to untangle the complicated motive of the "radicalized" gunman behind the massacre at a gay club in Orlando, as reports emerged that he frequented the popular nightclub and used gay dating apps.

Omar Mateen, a 29-year-old American of Afghan descent, pledged allegiance to the leader of the Islamic State (IS) group in the midst of his killing spree, officials say -- the worst mass shooting in US history.

Forty-nine people were killed and another 53 wounded after Mateen opened fire early Sunday at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, a resort city in central Florida mainly known as the home to Walt Disney World and other amusement parks, reports AFP. Mateen was killed in a shootout with police when they stormed the venue, freeing dozens of people trapped inside for about three hours after the assault began.

The Orlando gunman's wife has told federal agents she tried to talk her husband out of carrying out the attack, NBC News reported.

Omar Mateen's wife, Noor Zahi Salman, told the FBI she was with him when he bought ammunition and a holster, several officials familiar with the case said. She told the FBI that she once drove him to the gay nightclub, Pulse,

because he wanted to scope it out.

Authorities are considering filing criminal charges against Noor for failing to tell them what she knew before the brutal attack, law enforcement officials say, but no decision has been made.

She is cooperating with investigators, several officials say.

ORLANDO NIGHTCLUB MASSACRE

REPORT SAYS SHOOTER USED MULTIPLE GAY APPS

UN URGES US TO INTRODUCE ARMS CONTROLS



The FBI said Monday it was "highly confident" that Mateen had been self-radicalized by reading extremist propaganda online.

But the investigation took a new twist after witnesses said Mateen -- a practicing Muslim with a wife and a young son -- had been a regular at Pulse.

"Sometimes he would go over in the corner and sit and drink by himself, and other times he would get so drunk he was loud and belligerent," Ty

Smith told the Orlando Sentinel, noting he had seen Mateen at the club at least a dozen times.

Another Pulse regular, Kevin West, told the Los Angeles Times that Mateen messaged him on and off for a year using a gay chat app.

Other club goers told the media that Mateen had been using multiple gay apps, including Grindr, with mutual acquaintances to "hook up."

Investigators have talked with Mateen's ex-wife, Sitora Yusufiy, who said he had beat her.

He "might have been gay but chose to hide his true identity out of anger and shame," she added.

Relatives and acquaintances portrayed Mateen as an unstable man prone to violence who expressed homophobic views.

Thousands of people gathered in Orlando late Monday for a vigil honoring the victims, who ranged in age from 18 to 50.

The attacks triggered solidarity vigils across the world, including in New York, where thousands gathered at the Stonewall Inn, the birthplace of the US gay rights movement, and in Los Angeles, where pop star Lady Gaga led a tearful vigil.

On Monday, FBI Director James Comey explained that agents believe Mateen had been radicalized by Islamist propaganda, but found no evidence that the shooting had been coordinated from abroad.

Obama bins Trump over Muslim ban

Says his "dangerous" proposal enrages would-be extremists

CNN, Washington

President Barack Obama yesterday unleashed a blistering verbal assault on Donald Trump and his "dangerous" proposal for a ban on Muslims entering the country, saying the suggestion violates the principles of American democracy and generates rage among would-be extremists.

Dismissing the "yapping" from "politicians who tweet," Obama described Trump's suggestions as harmful to the country's national security.

"We are now seeing how dangerous this kind of mindset and this kind of thinking can be," he said. "We're starting to see where this kind of rhetoric and loose talk and sloppiness about who exactly we're fighting, where this can lead us."

Obama, sounding infuriated at critiques of his foreign policy, pushed back against criticism for not using the term "radical Islamic terrorism." And he accused Republicans of fostering resentment among Muslims that could generate further attacks.

"What exactly would using this language accomplish? What exactly would it change?" Obama asked during remarks at the Treasury Department. "Would it make ISIL less committed to try and kill Americans?" he continued, using a different acronym for ISIS.

"Would it bring in more allies? Is there a military strategy that is served by this? The answer is none of the above," he said. "Calling a threat by a different name does not make it go away."

Obama is to travel to Orlando on Thursday.



Afghan-Pak border clashes

kill 3 people

AFP, Jalalabad

Afghan and Pakistani forces clashed in an escalation of tensions between the neighbouring countries, killing at least three people and forcing the closure of the main border crossing, officials said yesterday.

The fighting erupted along the Torkham border on Sunday night and continued erratically over the next two days, apparently after Afghan forces objected to the construction of a gate on the Pakistani side.

The conflict prompted bitter recriminations on both sides, with Islamabad and Kabul summoning each other's diplomats to lodge strong formal complaints.

UN highlights child migrants' plights

AFP, Geneva

The number of unaccompanied children making the notoriously dangerous Mediterranean crossing aboard unseaworthy boats has more than doubled this year, the UN children's agency said in a new report yesterday.

Entitled "Danger every step of the way", the Unicef report said nine out of every 10 children arriving in Italy were unaccompanied minors, noting that more than 7,000 of them had arrived in the first five months of the year.

Unaccompanied and separated children are at particular risk of abuse and exploitation, notably by the smugglers they rely on to get to Europe, Unicef said. "Just about every child who arrives on the Italian island of Lampedusa or in Sicily has a harrowing story to tell," the report said.

Both boys and girls are subjected to sexual violence and forced into prostitution. Some of the girls are pregnant by the time they arrive on European shores.

Meanwhile, the EU's top diplomat in Turkey has stepped down after a row with Ankara over his criticism of the government's conduct in a landmark migrant deal, his office said yesterday.

The departure of Hansjoerg Haber is indicative of the increasingly fractious relationship between Ankara and Brussels, even as both sides try and implement an agreement aimed at reducing the flow of migrants to the European Union.

The EU's top court yesterday backed Britain's right to limit child benefits to European migrants, a hot-button issue in Britain's referendum on its future in the European Union next week.

The European Court of Justice said it was lawful for Britain to apply a "right-to-reside" rule to EU migrants based on whether they were working or seeking work, and would not be a burden to British taxpayers.

The decision comes as a series of opinion polls show a growing lead for the campaign for a "Brexit," despite Prime Minister David Cameron's appeals for people to vote to remain in the 28-nation bloc. The European Commission, the bloc's powerful executive arm, had taken Britain to court arguing that it had breached EU laws rule granting all European citizens the right to live and work wherever they like in the EU.

Ease Rohingya tensions

Dalai Lama urges Suu Kyi to be more open on the issue

REUTERS, Washington

Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi has a moral responsibility to try to ease tension between majority Buddhists and minority Rohingya Muslims, her fellow Nobel laureate, the Dalai Lama, said on Monday.

The Tibetan spiritual leader said he had stressed the issue in meetings with Suu Kyi, who came to power in April in the newly created role of state councillor in Myanmar's first democratically elected government in five decades.

"She already has the Nobel Peace Prize, a Nobel Laureate, so morally she should ... make efforts to reduce this tension between the Buddhist community and Muslim community," he told Reuters in an interview in Washington.

"I actually told her she should speak more openly."

Myanmar. Rights groups have sharply criticized Suu Kyi's reluctance to speak out on the Rohingya's plight.

The Dalai Lama said Suu Kyi, who won worldwide acclaim and a Nobel Peace Prize as a champion of democratic change in the face of military persecution, had responded to his calls by saying that the situation was "really complicated".

"So I don't know," he said. There is widespread hostility towards Rohingya Muslims in the Buddhist-majority country, including among some within Suu Kyi's party and its supporters.

More than 100 people were killed in violence in western Rakhine state in 2012, and some 125,000 Rohingya Muslims, who are stateless, took refuge in camps where their movements are severely restricted.

The Dalai Lama said some Buddhist monks in Myanmar "seem to have some kind of negative attitude to Muslims" and Buddhists who harbored such thoughts "should remember Buddha's face."



A protester demonstrates as he holds a placard during a demonstration protesting a controversial labour reform bill in Rennes, France. With the Euro 2016 football tournament in full swing in France, thousands of people took to the streets yesterday in new protests against the reforms, which are aimed at making the job market more flexible but are seen by critics as too pro-business.

PHOTO: AFP

India puts killer lions on trial

BBC ONLINE

Officials in India have "arrested" 18 lions as they try to find a man eater suspected of killing three people.

Forest officials in Gujarat state will test the lions' prints and excrement in an attempt to identify the killer.

The "guilty lion" will be kept in a zoo for life while the others will be released back into the Gir sanctuary, the officials told BBC Hindi. Six attacks on humans have been reported recently near the sanctuary, the only habitat of the Asiatic lion.

Gir sanctuary accommodates 270 lions, forcing some prides to settle outside the boundaries of the sanctuary.

Trump the 'saviour'

REUTERS, New Delhi

A Hindu fringe group celebrated the 70th birthday of Donald Trump in the Indian capital yesterday, calling the US presidential contender the "saviour of humanity" who could end the global threat posed by Islamist militants.

About 20 members of the far-right Hindu Sena, or Hindu Army, held the festivities as Americans grieved over the deaths of 49 people in the country's worst-ever mass shooting.

"Trump has said Muslims should be banned from entering America. Everyone should support that," said Hindu Sena leader Vishnu Gupta, whose group is known more for its publicity stunts than for having any meaningful support. Donning red and blue paper hats, activists gathered at a stall on a Delhi road to pledge their allegiance to Trump, saying they counted on Trump to contain India's neighbour Pakistan.



Sun newspaper endorses Brexit

AFP, London

An endorsement from the top-selling Sun tabloid boosted the campaign for Britain to leave the EU in next week's referendum yesterday as the increasing prospect of a Brexit weighed on global investor confidence. The decision by Rupert Murdoch's The Sun tabloid to endorse a Brexit is a further boost for the "Leave" campaign.

Bahrain court suspends main opposition bloc

AFP, Dubai

A Bahraini court yesterday suspended the main opposition Al-Wefaq group pending a verdict on dissolving it altogether, the justice ministry said, accusing the Shia bloc of breaking the law. The court also ordered Al-Wefaq's offices closed and its funds frozen.

Facebook 'declares war' in Philippine

AFP, Manila

Facebook has apologised for accidentally declaring the Philippines was in a state of war, in what was meant to be an innocuous flag tribute for Independence Day. The social media giant greeted Filipinos a "Happy Independence Day" on Sunday with a post showing a Philippine flag, but it was upside-down with red rather than blue at the top. In the Philippines this officially means the nation is at war.

Turkey police seize 'Gaddafi's dagger'

AFP, Ankara

Turkish police have seized a jewel-encrusted ivory dagger said to have belonged to Libya's late leader Moamer Gaddafi and which was going to be sold for millions of dollars on the black market. Anadolu news agency reported. Acting on a tip-off, the police raided a house of a businessman in the Esenyurt neighbourhood of Istanbul on the European side of the city and confiscated the artefact.

Trump 'bans Washington Post'

AFP, Washington

White House hopeful Donald Trump, in his latest attack on the media, said Monday he was rescinding The Washington Post's press credentials for covering his campaign events.

"Based on the incredibly inaccurate coverage and reporting of the record-setting Trump campaign, we are hereby revoking the press credentials of the phony and dishonest Washington Post," Trump wrote in a tweet.

Later, the campaign said in a statement that "we no longer feel compelled to work with a publication which has put its need for 'clicks' above journalistic integrity."