

PKK REBEL ATTACKS ON TURKEY FORCES

Spate of blasts kill 12, wound scores

AFP, Ankara

Twelve people were killed in a spate of bombings against Turkish security forces blamed on Kurdish rebels who appear to have ramped up their campaign of attacks in the aftermath of the failed coup.

Turkish officials accused the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) of carrying out three bloody attacks in less than 24 hours that for the first time struck areas in the east that are not predominantly Kurdish.

"This nation will never surrender to any terrorist organisation," Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said Thursday on a visit to the scene of one of the bombings.

The bloodshed comes in the week that the PKK -- regarded as a terrorist organisation by Ankara and its Western allies -- marks what is considered to be the 32nd anniversary of its armed rebellion against the Turkish state.

In the deadliest strike, five soldiers and a village guard were killed when a homemade bomb blew up in the path of a military convoy in the southeastern town of Bitlis on Thursday, Turkish media reported.

Just a few hours earlier, three police officers were killed and more than 200 people injured in a car bombing against police headquarters in the eastern city of Elazig. And on Wednesday night, two more policemen and a civilian were killed and dozens wounded in a similar attack in the city of Van.

The rebels appear to have intensified their attacks since the failed attempted coup on July 15.

"We will thwart the PKK like we thwarted FETO (Fethullah Terrorist Organisation)," Defence Minister Fikri Isik told the Anadolu news agency, using the name Ankara gives to the movement led by Gulen.



A man walks among the wreckage of vehicles at a blast scene following a car bomb attack on a police station in the eastern Turkish city of Elazig, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



Trump receives first classified intel briefing

AFP, Washington

Donald Trump on Wednesday received his first classified intelligence briefing, a privilege reserved for presidential candidates from the two main political parties.

The Republican nominee attended the briefing -- organized by the office of the director of national intelligence -- in secure rooms of the FBI's New York office, ABC television reported.

Democrat Hillary Clinton is set to receive her briefings separately.

The sessions -- designed to prepare candidates for the nation's highest office in the event they win November's general election -- provide information about global threats against the United States.

However, Trump received no information about intelligence operations or espionage, NBC reported.

Two of his leading advisors, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie and retired general Michael Flynn -- a former director of the Defense Intelligence Agency -- also took part.

Democrats have raised concerns about whether Trump is fit to receive classified information, including President Barack Obama, who issued a thinly-veiled warning at a news conference earlier this month.

"If they want to be president, they have got to start acting like (a) president," he said in a clear reference to Trump.

"That means being able to receive these briefings and not spreading them around."

'Show some humanity'

UN Syria envoy bemoans lack of aid deliveries, urges ceasefire

AGENCIES

The United Nations has suspended its humanitarian task force in Syria amid frustration over continued fighting in the country's civil war.

The decision was announced yesterday as a haunting photo of a young boy rescued from beneath rubble of his home after a devastating air strike in Aleppo provoked outrage around the world.

Staffan de Mistura, the special envoy for Syria, stopped a meeting on humanitarian access after just eight minutes, saying it made "no sense" to plan aid deliveries when they would not be let into besieged areas.

Speaking in Geneva, he said convoys had not reached surrounded towns and cities in the past month, and that the task force would remain suspended until next week as a signal to world powers.

"I insist, on behalf of the UN Secretary General, to have a 48-hour pause in Aleppo," de Mistura said, calling for a "gesture of humanity from both sides".

Friday will be the annual World Humanitarian Day, he noted.

"And in Syria what we are hearing and seeing is only fighting, offensives, counter-offensives, rockets, barrel bombs, mortars, hellfire cannons, napalm, chlorine, snipers, air strikes, suicide bombers," he said, in reference

SYRIA WAR

Regime planes bomb Kurdish-held city for the first time

Russia continues air campaign from Iran, US assessing if move violates UN resolution

to recent allegations of chemical weapons attacks.

Meanwhile, Syrian government warplanes bombed Kurdish-controlled areas of the city of Hasaka in northeastern Syria yesterday for the first time in the five-year-old civil war, the spokesman for the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia

and a monitoring group said.

YPG spokesman Redur Xelil said the air strikes had hit Kurdish districts of the city, which is mostly controlled by Kurdish groups, and the positions of a Kurdish security force known as the Asayish. "There are martyrs and wounded," he told Reuters.

Russian bombers, meanwhile, launched a third day of air strikes against Islamic state militants in Syria's Deir al-Zor province from an Iranian air base, the Russian defence ministry said yesterday.

And the United States said it was looking at whether Russia has violated a UN Security Council resolution on military dealings with Tehran by using the Iranian air base, the State Department said on Wednesday.

Moscow first used Iran as a base from which to launch air strikes in Syria on Tuesday, deepening its involvement in the five-year-old Syrian civil war and angering the United States. Russian officials on Wednesday rejected US criticisms of its use of the base.

'Refugees didn't bring terrorism to Germany'

REUTERS, Neustrelitz

Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Wednesday refugees had not brought terrorism to Germany, adding that Islam belonged in the country as long as it was practised in a way that respected the constitution.

More than a million people fleeing war and poverty in the Middle East, Africa and elsewhere arrived in Germany last year. The mood towards them has soured after a spate of attacks on civilians last month, including three carried out by migrants.

Two of those attacks were claimed by the Islamic State militant group.

"The phenomenon of Islamist terrorism, of IS, is not a phenomenon that came to us with the refugees," Merkel said at an election campaign event for her Christian Democrats in the eastern state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern ahead of a regional vote on Sept. 4.

Merkel said many people had travelled

from Germany to Syria for training with Islamist militants. In June Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere said a total of more than 800 were believed to have gone to Syria and Iraq.

"This group has worried us for several years," she said at the event in Neustrelitz, a town 100 km (60 miles) north of Berlin.

Merkel's popularity has suffered in the wake of the attacks and 52 percent of Germans think her migrant policy is bad, a poll published last week showed.

The influx of migrants, many of whom are Muslim, has boosted support for the anti-immigrant Alternative for Germany (AfD), which is expected to perform well in elections in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Berlin.

"We have said clearly that an Islam that works and lives on the basis of the constitution... belongs to Germany," Merkel said.

She added that a type of Islam that did not stick to the constitution or accept equal rights for women had no place in the country.



World's 'largest aircraft' gets off ground

AFP, London

The world's "largest aircraft" embarked on its maiden flight on Wednesday, four days after a previous attempt was abandoned due to technical issues.

The Airlander 10 -- part plane, part airship -- took to the skies amid cheers and applause from crowds gathered at an airfield in Cardington, central England.

The successful flight comes 85 years after another airship -- the ill-fated R101 -- took off from the same airfield in October 1930 before crashing in France, killing 48 people and effectively ending the development of airships in Britain.

Originally developed for the US army as a surveillance aircraft, the 92-metre- (302 feet-) long Airlander 10, also has potential uses in the commercial sector, such as carrying cargo, according to makers Hybrid Air Vehicles (HAV).

The firm, which describes the Airlander as the "largest aircraft currently flying", received a British government grant of 2.5 million pounds (\$3.7 million, 2.9 million euros) to develop the project.

The Airlander can fly at up to 4,880 metres (16,000 feet) and reach speeds of 148 kilometres per hour (92 miles per hour), according to HAV.

Filled with helium, it can stay airborne for more than two weeks uncrewed and up to five days if crewed.

H A V C E O Stephen McGlennan said the aircraft was cheaper and greener than helicopter technology.

"It's a great British innovation. It's a combination of an aircraft that has parts of normal fixed wing aircraft, it's got helicopter, it's got airship," he said.

A project to develop the aircraft for surveillance use by the US military was shelved due to budget cuts.



Australia state PM to host Manus refugees

REUTERS, Sydney

The premier of Western Australia state, a member of Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's Liberal Party, has offered to accept refugees from Australian-funded detention centres amid growing concern about conditions for the 1,350 people held in the camps.

Under Australian law, anyone intercepted trying to reach the country by boat is sent for processing to asylum seeker camps on the tiny Pacific island of Nauru or to Manus Island off Papua New Guinea. They are never eligible to be resettled in Australia.

Australia and Papua New Guinea said on Wednesday that they would close the Manus Island facility, but gave no timeline, and did not say where the people held there would be sent.

"We would certainly accommodate a number of them in Western Australia and we'd certainly support them as a state government," Western Australian Premier Colin Barnett told the Australian Broadcasting Corp on Wednesday night.

Barnett has taken a similar position in the past, and his stand demonstrated a rare public split in the conservative Liberal Party over the government's controversial detention policy.

Harsh conditions and reports of rampant abuse at the camps have drawn wide criticism at home and abroad. Australia says its hardline policy is needed to stop deaths at sea during the dangerous boat journey from Indonesia to Australia.

'To save a life is to save all of humanity'

Syria's White Helmets nominated for Nobel Peace Prize

AL JAZEERA ONLINE

An all-volunteer Syrian rescue and humanitarian group in Syria - credited with saving tens of thousands of people facing bombardments by Syrian government and Russian fighter jets since 2013 - has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

More than 130 organisations from across the world have backed the Syrian Civil Defence, also known as the White Helmets, whose members brave bombings and sniper fire to provide medical treatment for the wounded in rebel-controlled areas, to win the prestigious international award for peace efforts.

The Syria Campaign, an international human rights group advocating for the protection of civilians in the country, has launched an initiative calling for the White

Helmets to win the prize. The winner will be announced on October 7.

Former bakers, tailors, engineers, painters and pharmacists are among the organisation's members, who pledge to help anyone in need regardless of religious or political affiliations. The group's 3,000 members

operate across the country, including the governorates of Aleppo, Idlib, Latakia, Homs, Deraa and Damascus.

Ammar Aosalmo, a senior member of the group's branch in Aleppo, told Al Jazeera that at least 134 members have died on duty and explained his motivation for risking his life for others by saying the group was viewed by many as their last hope.

He cited the White Helmets' motto - taken from Islam's holiest book, the Quran: "To save a life is to save all of humanity."

