

KEY EVENTS



IRAN-SAUDI ARABIA ROW (JANUARY 3)

Saudi Arabia breaks off diplomatic ties with Iran in a row over the execution of a Shia cleric, sparking protests during which the kingdom's embassy in Tehran is firebombed.

IRAN NUKE DEAL COMES INTO FORCE (JANUARY 16)

Iran's historic nuclear deal with global powers comes into force.

TURKEY-EU MIGRANT DEAL (MARCH 18)

Turkish and EU leaders agree a deal to curb the huge flow of asylum-seekers to Europe, aimed at easing the biggest migration crisis since World War II.

OBAMA VISITS CUBA (MARCH 20-22)

US President Barack Obama holds talks with Cuban counterpart Raul Castro in Havana, setting aside a bitter standoff between the United States and the communist island that had lasted more than 50 years.

BRUSSELS TERROR ATTACK (MARCH 22)

Suicide bombings at Brussels airport and a metro station blamed on a cell linked to the jihadist Islamic State group kill 32 people.

SUU KYI TAKES CHARGE (MARCH 30)

Aung San Suu Kyi's democracy movement takes power after 50 years of military rule in Myanmar, with a close aide of the Nobel Peace Laureate sworn in as president.

PANAMA PAPERS LEAK (APRIL 3)

A massive leak of 11.5 million documents allegedly exposes the secret offshore dealings of aides to Russian President Vladimir Putin, world leaders and celebrities including Barcelona's Lionel Messi.

DEADLY ECUADOR QUAKE (APRIL 16)

A devastating 7.8-magnitude quake in Ecuador kills more than 670 people and leaves almost 6,300 injured.



DUTERTE WINS IN PHILIPPINES (MAY 9)

Firebrand Philippine politician Rodrigo Duterte secures a landslide presidential victory built on foul-mouthed populist tirades.

AFGHAN TALIBAN CHIEF KILLED (MAY 21)

Taliban chief Mullah Akhtar Mansour is killed in a US air strike, in a blow to the resurgent militant movement.

OBAMA IN HIROSHIMA (MAY 27)

Obama pays tribute to victims of the world's first atomic bomb and calls for an end to nuclear weapons as he makes a historic visit to the Japanese city of Hiroshima.

ORLANDO TERROR ATTACK (JUNE 12)

Forty-nine people are killed when a gunman, who pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group, opens fire and seizes hostages at a popular gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida.

TERROR STRIKES TURKEY AIRPORT (JUNE 28)

Forty-seven people are killed and more than 200 are injured in a triple suicide bombing and gun attack at Istanbul's main airport.

DEADLY CAR BOMBING IN IRAQ (JULY 3)

More than 300 are killed when a suicide car bomber attacks a busy shopping area in Baghdad. The blast is claimed by IS.

NICE TRUCK CARNAGE (JULY 14)

A Tunisian national rams a truck into people celebrating Bastille Day in Nice, killing 86. IS claims the attack.

ATTACK ON SHIAS IN AFGHANISTAN (JULY 23)

IS jihadists claim responsibility for twin explosions that rip through crowds of Shiite Hazaras in Kabul, killing 85 people in the deadliest attack in the Afghan capital since 2001.

ITALY QUAKE (AUGUST 24)

A 6.0-6.2 magnitude quake hits mountain villages in a remote area straddling the Italian regions of Umbria, Marche and Lazio. The small mountain town of Amatrice bears the brunt of the earthquake that kills 297 people and injures hundreds more.

NORTH KOREA TESTS NUKE (SEPTEMBER 9)

Pyongyang carries out its fifth and most powerful nuclear test to date.

HURRICANE MATTHEW HITS (OCTOBER 4)

Hurricane Matthew leaves more than 540 dead in Haiti, devastating the south-west of the country.



MOSUL OFFENSIVE BEGINS (OCTOBER 17)

IRAQ - Iraqi forces launch an offensive aimed at retaking Mosul, IS's last stronghold in the country. Since the launch of the assault more than 80,000 people have fled the fighting.

FARC PEACE DEAL SIGNED (NOVEMBER 24)

President Juan Manuel Santos, the 2016 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, and FARC rebels sign a new peace deal to end their half-century-old conflict.

GUTERRES BECOMES UN CHIEF (DECEMBER 12)

Antonio Guterres becomes the ninth UN secretary general.

Russian Envoy Killed in Turkey (December 19) Andrei Karlov, the Russian ambassador to Turkey, is assassinated in Ankara.

TRUCK CARNAGE IN BERLIN

An attack to the Christmas market in Berlin killed at least 12. IS claimed responsibility.

REGIME TAKES CONTROL OF ALEPPO (DECEMBER 22)

After years of fighting, rebel fighters leave Aleppo under a US-Russia backed deal.

UN REBUKES ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS (DECEMBER 23)

United Nations Security Council adopts Resolution 2334 condemning "Israeli settlements in Palestinian territories occupied since 1967".



FLASHBACK 2016

The surprise election of Donald Trump in US, Britain's exit from the EU and terrorist attacks around the world were among the biggest news stories that made headlines in 2016. With deaths of so many towering figures and devastating natural disasters, many have dubbed 2016 as the worst ever year in recent memory.

TRUMP EARTHQUAKE

Impulsive, immoderate and politically untested, Donald Trump did not exactly seem to fit the profile of a candidate for the most powerful job in the world. But with his boundless energy and outsized ego, the billionaire Republican has defied all predictions. On November 8, Trump, a 70-year-old populist with no political experience, wins the US presidential election against Hillary Clinton. He dominated the news in 2016 by breaking diplomatic taboos and unsettling America's friends and foes alike. Elsewhere in the world 2016 is also marked by a surge in populism. In Asia, firebrand Rodrigo Duterte overwhelmingly wins the Philippines' presidency in May, while in Europe, nationalist and far-right parties gain ground.

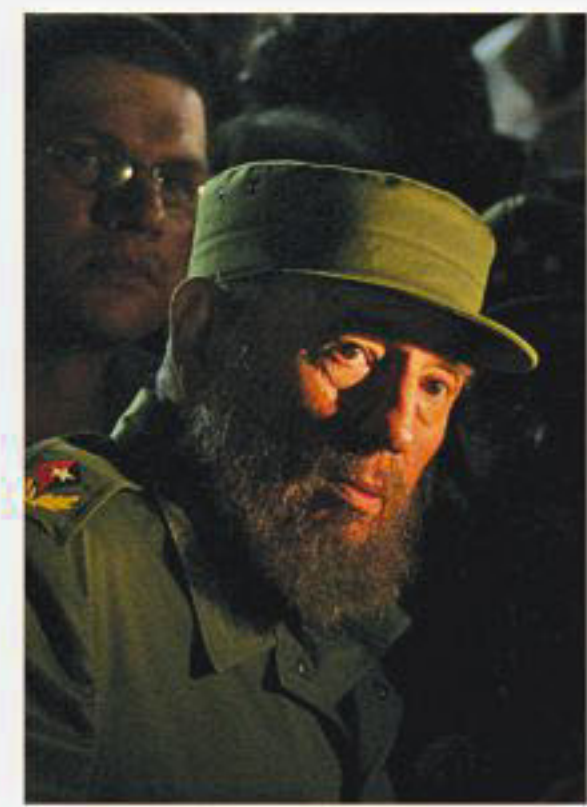


HORROR IN SYRIA'S ALEPPO

The ongoing Syrian civil war, which has resulted in the death of more than 400,000 people since 2011, reached a bloody climax this year as airstrikes from President Bashar-al Assad and Russia continued to pound rebel held positions throughout the country. Several ceasefires were nearly reached before falling apart as tens of thousands continued to die. By mid-December, government forces reclaimed the city of Aleppo from rebels and Islamist fighters. The United Nations, its credibility in question, called it a "meltdown of humanity" as civilians were reportedly killed trying to flee the city.

ATTEMPTED TURKEY COUP AND PURGES

Overnight July 15-16 a rogue military faction tries unsuccessfully to oust President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. At least 290 people died and more than 1,400 were injured in the chaotic night of violence. The regime says exiled Muslim preacher Fethullah Gulen is behind the putsch and tightens its grip on power. More than 37,000 people are arrested and tens of thousands more sacked in purges.



FIDEL CASTRO DIES

On November 25, Fidel Castro, the father of the Cuban revolution and international communism's last great figure, dies aged 90, having been the counterpart to 11 US presidents from Dwight Eisenhower to Barack Obama



Brexit



On June 23, Britain's stunning vote to leave the European Union sent shockwaves around the world. Conservative prime minister David Cameron steps down, to be replaced in July by Theresa May. She promises by March 31, 2017 to invoke Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty, the first step in leaving the bloc.

MIGRANTS FACE BARRIERS

From February, the "Balkan route" leading from Greece to Germany, and taken by hundreds of thousands of migrants the year before, is closed. In March, the EU and Turkey forge a deal for Ankara to halt the flow of migrants to Europe, an accord which is largely successful in reducing numbers crossing the Aegean Sea between Turkey and Greece. However the flow of migrants to Italy via the Mediterranean Sea reaches record levels and at least 4,700 people have died or are missing feared drowned this year while trying to cross the perilous sea. In France, the notorious "Jungle" migrant camp near the port of Calais is finally closed in October, and an estimated 7,000 migrants are evacuated.



TERROR STRIKES AROUND THE GLOBE

As it continues to lose territory in Iraq, Syria and Libya, the jihadist Islamic State claims responsibility for, or inspires, deadly attacks around the world. Several western countries, including France, where 86 die in Nice, the United States (49 dead in Orlando), Belgium (32 dead in Brussels) and Germany are hit by attacks. Turkey is also targeted by several attacks blamed on the IS or on Kurdish guerrillas which leave dozens dead. Taliban and IS also hit Pakistan and Afghanistan with deadly attacks.

NOTABLE DEATHS

DAVID BOWIE

(January 10)
The legendary British singer and musician died aged 69



BOUTROS BOUTROS-GHALI

(February - 16)
Egyptian diplomat who was the UN secretary general from 1992 to 1996 died aged 93.



HARPER LEE

(February 19)
US author of "To Kill a Mockingbird" dies at 89.



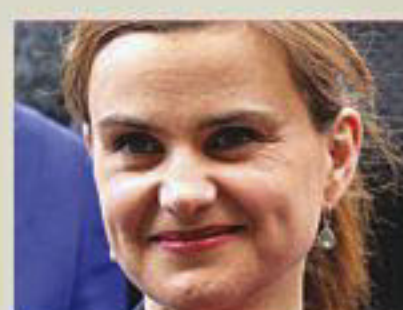
MUHAMMAD ALI (June 3)

US boxing legend, triple world heavyweight champion dies at 74.



JO COX (June 16)

The 41-year-old British Labour Party MP was killed a week before Britons voted for Brexit.



SHIMON PERES

(September 28)
A founding father of Israel and Nobel Peace Prize winner dies aged 93.



BHUMIBOL ADULYADEJ

(October 13)
The respected king of Thailand and the world's longest reigning monarch dies aged 88.



LEONARD COHEN

(November 7)
The Canadian poet and musician died aged 82.



JAYALALITHAA JAYARAM

(December 5)
The five time chief minister of Tamil Nadu dies aged 68.



GEORGE MICHAEL

(December 25)
The pop superstar dies on Charismas Day aged 53.



INDO-PAK TENSIONS

After a series of infiltrations and attacks on military bases by alleged Pak-based militants in Kashmir region, India on 29 September claimed that it had conducted "surgical strikes" against militant launch pads across the Line of Control. Pakistan rejected the claim. The simmering tension peaked with the cancellation of Saarc summit. And Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi vowed to isolate Pakistan terming it as the 'mother state of terror'. Pakistan, on its part, tried to put pressure on India internationally by highlighting Kashmir issue where nearly 90 people died in protests.