

# NEWSIN brief

## Israeli PM presses Russia on Iran

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held talks with Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu yesterday, saying his country will not allow Iran to "establish itself militarily in Syria". Both Russia and Iran, Israel's main enemy, are backing President Assad's regime in the civil war in neighbouring Syria.

## UK hate crimes surge on Brexit

Hate crimes in Britain surged by the highest amount on record last year, official figures showed yesterday, with the vote to leave the European Union a significant factor. The Home Office said there were 80,393 offences in 2016/17, a rise of 29 per cent from the year before.

## Zuma fires critic in S Africa reshuffle

South African President Jacob Zuma sacked a vocal critic from his cabinet yesterday. In his second reshuffle this year, Zuma dropped Higher Education minister Blade Nzimande, a member of the South African Communist Party, which is a key political ally of the ruling ANC.

## 29 killed in central Nigeria violence

At least 29 people were killed in a new flare-up of violence in central Nigeria targeting people sheltered in a primary school, prompting President Muhammadu Buhari to issue an appeal to "stop the madness". The attack happened on Monday in Plateau state, which has been dogged for years by ethnic unrest.



Smoke rises from police headquarters while Afghan security forces keep watch after a suicide car bomber and gunmen attacked the provincial police headquarters in Gardez, the capital of Paktia province, Afghanistan, yesterday. Two separate suicide and gun attacks on police and soldiers in Afghanistan left at least 71 dead and nearly 170 wounded.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Catalans take to the streets again

Spain detains two key separatists

Thousands of people took to the streets of Catalonia yesterday after a judge ordered the detention of two separatist leaders, further inflaming tensions over the region's chaotic referendum on splitting from Spain. Thousands of workers in Barcelona and other cities staged a brief walkout at noon in protest at Monday's move by the National Court in Madrid to keep Jordi Cuixart and Jordi Sanchez behind bars on sedition charges. "Repression is not the solution," protesters shouted as hundreds gathered outside the Catalan regional government offices in central Barcelona. "Now anyone can be put in jail," said Carme Guell, a 62-year-old beautician who joined the walkout as civil servants from nearby regional ministries blocked the street. Like many who back independence for semi-autonomous Catalonia, Guell said the wealthy northeastern region was "treated like a colony. All our money is taken away, nothing is reinvested here." Catalonia's separatist government sparked Spain's worst political crisis in decades by holding a banned independence referendum on October 1, when a violent crackdown on voters by national police shocked the world. As the standoff shows little sign of easing, Madrid announced late Monday that it was cutting its growth forecast for next year from 2.6 to 2.3 per cent. Further protests against the detention of Cuixart and Sanchez were planned for yesterday afternoon.

## IS cleared from Raqa

Says US-backed force; clearing ops under way to uncover sleeper cells, mines in the Syrian city

The SDF broke into Raqa in June, after months of fighting to surround the city, and yesterday flushed the last few hundred IS fighters from their remaining positions in the main hospital and the municipal stadium. "Everything is finished in Raqa, our forces have taken full control of Raqa," the alliance's spokesman Talal Sello told AFP. He said the SDF was combing the city for any remaining jihadists who had not surrendered or been killed. "The military operations in Raqa have finished, but there are clearing operations now under way to uncover any sleeper cells there might be and remove mines," he said.

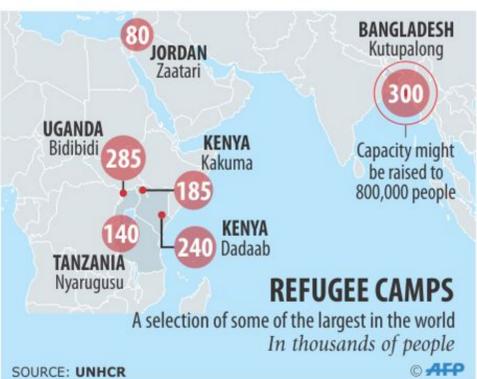


The announcement came just days after the SDF said it was launching the final phase of its operation to retake the city. There had been fears that the force, backed by the US-led coalition battling IS in Syria and Iraq, could get bogged down in a protracted battle for the last 10 per cent of the city where the jihadists had prepared for a final stand.

## Biggest refugee camps in the world

Bangladesh has announced plans to build a refugee camp that could accommodate around 800,000 Rohingya Muslims pouring over the border from Myanmar. The camp would be the largest in the world. The UN's refugee agency estimates there are an unprecedented 65.5 million refugees in the world today, split between urban centres or informal settlements, and more formal camps. Here are some of the largest of these camps, based on UN figures.

- BIDIBIDI, UGANDA: 285,000**  
This vast settlement in far northern Uganda has sprung up over the past year as people flood out of South Sudan, fleeing civil war and severe food shortages. A village in the Yumbe district on the South Sudan border, Bidibidi became a refugee settlement in August 2016 and now hosts nearly 285,000 people, according to figures from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.
- DADAAB, KENYA: 239,500**  
The sprawling Dadaab complex 100 kilometres (60 miles) from Kenya's border with Somalia has housed Somali refugees for around 26 years. There were about 239,500 people in Dadaab at the end of September, according to UN figures. The population peaked at around 485,000 in 2012 following a new influx after famine in Somalia.
- KAKUMA, KENYA: 185,000**  
This camp on the outskirts of the town of the same name in northwestern Kenya was established in 1992 following the arrival of thousands of people fleeing from southern Sudan during the 1983-2005 war.



Many were young boys who risked being forced into combat. The camp also took in some of the hundreds of thousands of Ethiopians who fled around the fall of the military government in 1991. **NYARUGUSU, TANZANIA: 139,630** Just 37 kilometres from the border with Burundi, this camp was opened in November 1996 to host people fleeing conflict in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo. Tens of thousands of Burundians arrived in 2015 when their country plunged into crisis after President Pierre Nkurunziza sought a fiercely contested third term. **ZATAARI, JORDAN: 80,140** About 5.2 million Syrians have left their country since conflict erupted in 2011, the largest migration in the world today. About 20 per cent of those in Jordan are in camps, the largest of which is Zataari with about 80,140 people, according to figures for August.

## Malta car bomb blast kills Panama Papers journo

Son of slain whistleblower flays 'complicit' PM

Galizia filed a police report two weeks ago saying she was receiving threats, law enforcement officials told Malta news outlets on Monday. A half hour before she was killed, she posted to her website an item about a libel claim the prime minister's chief of staff had brought against a former opposition over comments the latter made about corruption. Meanwhile, son of Galizia accused Prime Minister Joseph Muscat of being "complicit" in her grisly killing. In an emotional post on his Facebook page, the son accused Muscat of filling his office with crooks and creating a culture of impunity that had turned Malta into a "mafia island". Her slaying drew swift denunciations of EU, reported AFP. "We are horrified by the fact that a well known and respected Maltese journalist, Ms Daphne Caruana Galizia, lost her life yesterday (Monday) in what was seemingly a targeted attack," European Commission spokesman Margaritis Schinas told reporters.



Caruana Galizia



Students from a tourism and cooking college in Yangzhou University form the emblem of the Chinese Communist Party of China with carrots carved in the shape of flowers yesterday as part of festivities ahead of the upcoming 19th Party Congress in Yangzhou in China's eastern Jiangsu province. The Chinese Communist Party opens its week-long, twice-a-decade congress today.



## FORBES WEALTH LIST Trump's fortune slides by \$600m

America's richest may be getting richer but President Donald Trump's fortune has slid by \$600 million to \$3.1 billion, according to a list of 400 billionaires released by Forbes magazine yesterday. Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates topped the list for a 24th consecutive year on a net worth of \$89 billion with Amazon's Jeff Bezos, worth \$81.5 billion, number two. But Trump, the first US president to come solely from the private sector, is ranked 248 -- sharing the spot with 27-year-old Snap co-founder and CEO Evan Spiegel, the youngest person on the list.

## Gaza unity deal at risk: Hamas

Hamas warned yesterday that Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas's delay in easing sanctions on Gaza was putting at risk a landmark unity deal signed last week. "The continuation of the punitive measures against our people in Gaza a month after the dissolution of the administrative council spoils the general atmosphere for reconciliation," a party spokesman said in a statement to Hamas media. Islamist group Hamas last month agreed to dissolve its administrative council, seen as a rival government in Gaza, and return civilian power in the enclave to the Palestinian Authority a decade after seizing it in a near civil war. Chief among their demands, however, was that Abbas drop a series of measures taken against Gaza. Among these were reductions in energy payments for the territory which left its two million residents with only a few hours of mains electricity per day. Hamas is due to hand over Gaza's border crossings by November 1 ahead of a full transfer of power by December 1. The PA's top border official visited Gaza on Monday.

## Kirkuk crisis escalates

Iraqi forces seize key oil fields, Sinjar from Kurdish control

Iraqi forces took control of the two largest oil fields in the disputed northern province of Kirkuk yesterday demolishing Kurdish hopes of creating a viable independent state. The Kurds withdrew without a fight after federal government troops and militia entered the city of Kirkuk and seized the provincial governor's office and key military bases in response to a Kurdish vote for independence last month. The fields accounted for around 250,000 barrels per day of the 650,000 bpd that the autonomous Kurdish region exported under its own auspices and their loss deals a huge blow to its already parlous finances and its dreams of economic self-sufficiency. Iraqi forces took down the red, white, green and yellow Kurdish flags that had flown over the pumping stations of the Bai Hassan and Havana oil fields and raised the national flag. The fields' Kurdish technicians had halted production and fled on Monday evening ahead of the entry of federal government troops and police. Police Colonel Ahmed Modhi hailed the restoration of federal control over the two fields, which the Kurds had taken over during the chaos that followed the Islamic State group's lightning advance through northern and western Iraq in 2014. "It's a national resource and it belongs to Iraq, just like the natural resources of the country as a whole," Modhi told AFP.



## Marawi 'liberated' from IS: Duterte

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte yesterday declared a southern city "liberated from terrorists' influence" but the military said the five-month battle against militants loyal to the Islamic State group was not yet over. Duterte led rain-soaked soldiers in celebrations in Marawi, a day after the military announced the death of the head of the Islamic State group in Southeast Asia, Isnilon Hapilon, in a gunbattle in the city. "Ladies and gentlemen, I hereby declare Marawi liberated from the terrorists' influence that marks the beginning of the rehabilitation," Duterte said, speaking moments after explosions and gunfire were heard in the city. "I promise you this will never happen again," he said as he gave troops a snappy salute. Duterte stood on a gymnasium stage with a ruined roof near a tarpaulin bearing large photos of the dead militants. After he left, soldiers took selfies in front of a bombed-out building while others hoisted a Philippine flag atop a tank. Military chief of staff General Eduardo Ano later clarified that the fighting against 20 to 30 remaining militants continued, describing them as "stragglers" and the clashes as "mopping operations".