

# Morocco wants women, minors held in Iraq, Syria to come home

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1572297652353947300

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SALE: Morocco wants to bring home 671 Moroccan women and children linked with extremist groups who are held in Syria and Iraq, with a top investigative official saying they're harmless.

Abdelhak Khiame, director of the Central Bureau of Judicial Investigations, said at a news conference Monday that the 280 women and 391 minors "are not terrorists" and can't be blamed "for anything."

Khiame said the North African kingdom also would "welcome" the return of male fighters, but in their case "will subject them to the law."

Morocco's top intelligence official, Boubker Sabik, said 1,659 Moroccans joined the Daesh group or other extremist organizations, and 742 of them died fighting.

Moroccan authorities dismantled a cell of Daesh loyalists on Friday who were allegedly preparing a plot to harm the economy.



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Morocco arrests six suspected Daesh members  
Morocco reshuffles cabinet, keeps foreign and finance ministers

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## Led by Sanders, Democrats vow to press Israel on Palestinian state

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1572297886773961300

Mon, 2019-10-28 21:14

WASHINGTON: Democratic presidential contenders vowed Monday to switch gears sharply from Donald Trump's hawkish embrace of Israel, pledging they would press for a peace settlement that leads to a Palestinian state.

Half a year after Democratic candidates all shunned the annual conference of AIPAC, the historic pro-Israel lobby, five candidates came in person to deliver a peace message in the same Washington convention center before J Street, a left-leaning group which argues that it is more in tune with American Jews.

Senator Bernie Sanders, who rarely talks about his Jewish faith, explained how the murder of much of his father's family in the Holocaust shaped his progressive views.

"If there is any people on earth who understands the danger of racism and white nationalism, it is certainly the Jewish people," Sanders said to thunderous applause.

Rising from his seat on stage to give a campaign-style address, Sanders, who would be the first Jewish president, accused both Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of fomenting division.

"Let me underline this because it will be misunderstood – it is not anti-Semitism to say that the Netanyahu government has been racist. It is a fact," he said.

"We demand that the Israeli government sit down with the Palestinian people and negotiate an agreement that works for all parties," he said.

Sanders said his message to Israel would be, "if you want military aid, you are going to have to fundamentally change your relationship" with the Palestinians.

He called for some of the \$3.8 billion in annual military assistance to be turned into humanitarian aid for the Gaza Strip in a "radical intercession" for the packed, impoverished territory that has been under a blockade since it elected the Islamist movement Hamas in 2007.

"Who is going to deny that when youth unemployment is 60 percent, when people

have no hope, when people cannot literally leave the region – who can think for a moment that you're not laying the groundwork for continued violence?" he said.

Trump, whose evangelical Christian base is staunchly pro-Israel, has taken a series of historic steps including recognizing bitterly divided Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

The Trump administration has signaled support as Netanyahu – whose political future is unclear after two inconclusive elections – flirts with annexing parts of the West Bank.

Democratic frontrunners Joe Biden and Elizabeth Warren, both appearing before J Street in video messages rather than in person, said they would oppose any action that closes the door on a Palestinian state.

"If Israel's government continues with steps to formally annex the West Bank, the US should make clear that none of our aid should be used to support annexation," Warren said.

Warren said that she would reverse two key measures of Trump – by resuming aid to the UN refugee agency for Palestinians and allowing the Palestine Liberation Organization to unshutter its Washington office.

While not reversing course on the US embassy, she said she would reopen the US mission in east Jerusalem which would become an embassy if a peace deal creates a Palestinian state.

Biden, who had uneasy relations with Netanyahu while vice president, said: "We can't be afraid to tell the truth to our closest friends."

"The two-state solution is the best, if not the only, way to secure a peaceful future for a Jewish, democratic state of Israel," Biden said.

In a scene unimaginable at AIPAC, the mostly Jewish crowd gave a standing ovation to chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat as he stood on stage to the sounds of U2's "Beautiful Day" and said of creating a Palestinian state, "Let's not give up."

With some 4,000 people in attendance, J Street still had less than a quarter of the turnout of AIPAC, which is itself non-partisan but this year drew a who's who of Republicans.

J Street president Jeremy Ben-Ami said he believed his organization was more in line with the US Jewish community, which votes overwhelmingly Democratic.

"If you go to the AIPAC conference and you're standing and cheering for Trump and Netanyahu, that is one approach.

"This is a conference where you stand up and you fight against what Trump and Netanyahu are seeking to do," he said.



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Bernie Sanders to run for US president in 2020 Sanders set for 'vigorous' campaign return after heart scare

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## [Wrong about Japan: Arab News-YouGov survey reveals Arab misconceptions](#)

Author:

Mon, 2019-10-28 03:19

DUBAI: Nearly half the people in the Arab world believe the Japanese invented the mobile phone and more than a third think they also created personal computers, a new survey suggests.

The Arab News-YouGov poll, which highlights Arabs' positive perceptions of Japan, has also revealed a number of misconceptions.

Arabs are misinformed about Japan's executive authority, with 30 percent thinking the emperor has the power to sign laws. An even bigger number – 45

percent – believe Japan has a nuclear bomb.

Based on online interviews with 3,033 Arabic speakers from 18 countries, the poll was commissioned by Arab News as part of the recent launch of its Japan online edition.

Such misconceptions among Arabs were attributed by experts to several factors, including how history is taught, knowledge gaps across generations and the use of technology.

## **Politics**

Ignorance of Japanese politics was also common among the respondents, almost half of whom said Japan was a member of the UN Security Council. Nine percent thought Japan's military was aligned with North Korea.

Japan's history of earthquakes and natural disasters, including the 2012 Fukushima nuclear plant disaster, appears to have influenced Arab perceptions. Close to half of the respondents associated Japan with earthquakes, despite its advanced infrastructure for managing natural disasters.

Dr. Theodore Karasik, senior adviser at Gulf State Analytics in Washington, DC, said mobile phones were a useful tool to eliminate misconceptions. "The way Japanese society uses mobile phones provides an interesting cross-cultural reference point regarding use of public space and being better informed," he said.

And who invented them? That was Marty Cooper, a US engineer, in 1973.



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[How Arabs view Japan](#)

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[Japan](#)

Arabs underestimate Japan's energy dependence on the Gulf, finds poll  
Most Arabs in the dark about Japan's power structure

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## [Al-Baghdadi's death calms 'rage and fire' inside terror survivors](#)

Mon, 2019-10-28 00:59

JEDDAH/ANKARA: The US special forces in eight helicopter gunships left Anbar province in western Iraq and flew low and fast below the night sky of northern Syria.

Their destination: Barisha, just north of Idlib, 5 kilometers from the Turkish border. Their target: Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, founder and leader of

Daesh, and the world's most wanted terrorist, with a \$25 million bounty on his head.

The flight was far from safe. The ground beneath the US aircraft bristled with conflicting military forces in Syria's complex civil war – from the Assad regime, Russia, Iran and Turkey, to myriad heavily armed extremist militias, many linked to Al-Qaeda.

However, Russia controls the airspace and both Moscow and Ankara had been tipped off that a US mission was underway. The gunships, and their accompanying attack drones, reached their destination unharmed.

## Opinion

This section contains relevant reference points, placed in (Opinion field)

Only there did they encounter armed defensive action from the ground, which was swiftly dealt with by a display of devastating firepower from above.

Until then, asleep in the hideout in Barisha where he had spent the previous 48 hours, Al-Baghdadi must have thought he was safe. But as the US special forces blasted their way into his compound and hunted him down, he knew it was all over.

Wearing a suicide vest and chased by US troops with pursuit dogs, the Daesh leader fled into a dead-end tunnel, taking three children with him.

Confronted with either capture or death, Al-Baghdadi chose the latter, and detonated his explosive vest – not only killing himself, but adding three more innocent lives to the toll of thousands that he and his followers had already taken.

In the Situation Room at the White House in Washington, DC, US President Donald Trump watched the events unfold via a live video feed, accompanied by senior administration officials, security advisers and military chiefs. When it was over, and US forces safely back at base, he tweeted: "Something very big has just happened!"

It had indeed. The significance of Al-Baghdadi's death may be gauged by the number of countries and individuals lining up to claim credit for having played a key role.

In northern Syria, Kurdish fighters from the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) said they had supplied crucial intelligence on Al-Baghdadi's whereabouts.

Their commander, Mazloum Abdi, said it was a joint operation after "cooperation on the ground and accurate monitoring" for five months. He called it "successful and historic" joint intelligence work.

In Iraq, senior officials said vital intelligence was obtained after an Al-Baghdadi aide was killed by a US airstrike in western Iraq. The man's wife was arrested and was a key source of information on the Daesh leader's whereabouts. Al-Baghdadi's brother-in-law was also arrested by the Iraqis, and supplied further information.

In Ankara, the defense ministry said: "Turkey exchanged information and coordinated with US military counterparts prior to the US operation in Idlib.

"We continue to work with our friends and allies against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. It's time to eliminate all the remaining terrorist leaders."

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## AL-BAGHDADI SIGNIFICANT DATES

- Apr. 2010 Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi becomes leader of Islamic State of Iraq
- Apr. 2013 Al-Baghdadi announces group's new name
- Jan. 2014 Daesh takes control of Fallujah in Iraq and Raqqa in Syria
- June 9-11, 2014 Daesh seizes Iraq's Mosul and Tikrit
- June 29, 2014 Al-Baghdadi declares "Caliphate" over Iraqi, Syrian territory
- July 4, 2014 Al-Baghdadi makes first public appearance in Mosul's Al-Nuri Mosque
- Aug. 2014 Daesh captures Sinjar in Iraq and begins slaughter of Yazidi community
- Aug. 2014 The US launches targeted airstrikes against Daesh in Iraq
- June 26, 2016 Fallujah declared liberated by Iraqi forces
- June 6, 2017 US-backed, Kurdish-led SDF fighters begin assault to liberate Raqqa
- Oct. 17, 2017 SDF takes full control of Raqqa
- Aug. 23, 2018 Al-Baghdadi releases audio recording urging followers to continue the fight
- Oct. 27, 2019 President Trump declares Al-Baghdadi's death after US raid in northwestern Syria

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In remarks on Sunday, Trump paid tribute to the many victims of Daesh's gruesome filmed executions at the height of their so-called "caliphate", and their families were swift to respond to Al-Baghdadi's death.

"I am grateful to our president and brave troops for finding Al-Baghdadi," said Diane Foley, whose son James was among the victims. "I hope this will hinder the resurgence of terror groups and I pray that captured fighters will be brought to trial and held accountable."

Safi Al-Kasasbeh, whose son Muath was a Royal Jordanian Air Force pilot burned to death by Daesh after his F-16 jet crashed over Syria in December 2014, said: "I congratulate myself and the whole Muslim nation. This tyrant and terrorist has caused damage to the image of Islam and portrayed it as a



terrorist religion. Islam is innocent of such a coward.

“I had hoped I would have the chance to kill him myself, but nevertheless this news of him being terminated has calmed the rage and fire inside me.”



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Trump: Daesh leader Al-Baghdadi 'died a coward' in US raid in north-west Syria  
World reacts to Daesh leader Al-Baghdadi's death  
Iraq's Mosul breathes easier after death of 'butcher' Al-Baghdadi  
Most Wanted Man On Earth: Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, self-proclaimed leader of the murderous Daesh 'caliphate'

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[\*\*Iraqi PM Abdul-Mahdi refuses to\*\*](#)

# resign over deadly protests

Mon, 2019-10-28 00:38

BAGHDAD: Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi will not resign in response to the demands of demonstrators and refuses to allow his country to slide into civil war, his spokesman said Sunday.

Baghdad and seven other Shiite-dominated southern provinces have witnessed mass demonstrations since the beginning of the month. The protests have been against corruption, unemployment and a lack of basic services.

Demonstrations stalled after the first week when at least 147 people, including security personnel, were killed and more than 7,000 injured in a bloody crackdown by the Iraqi government and its allies.

But the protests resumed on Friday after Iraqi forces vowed not to use live ammunition against demonstrators.

Despite the pledge, at least 74 people have been killed and more than 3,600 wounded in the past three days, according to the Independent High Commission for Human Rights in Iraq.

Protesters have responded to the violence by increasing their demands, which now include the resignation of Abdul-Mahdi and his government, changing the election law, and holding fresh elections.

The prime minister's insistence on not resigning, means the cycle of violence is expected to continue and increases the possibility of clashes erupting between the different Shiite factions.

"Abdel-Mahdi will not resign in this critical and difficult circumstance," Sa'ad Al-Hadaithi, the prime minister's spokesman, told a local Iraqi TV station on Sunday evening. "The resignation of the government could lead the country into a dangerous situation. We warn of the loss of civil peace and the collapse of the country into chaos.

"The prime minister continues to respond to the legitimate demands of the demonstrators and will not allow the loss of control of the situation."

Most of the casualties in Baghdad have been from tear gas, while in the provinces they have mainly been caused by clashes when demonstrators attempted to attack the headquarters of Iranian-backed political parties, security officials and witnesses told Arab News.

Abdul-Mahdi attempted to quell the protests with a promise to secure hundreds of thousands of jobs, speeding up corruption trials, and increased welfare for poor families.

But after a two week pause, the incentives appear to have failed with large numbers of demonstrators, returning to the streets with increased popular support, especially in the Shiite communities.

His refusal to resign is linked to the positions of his local and regional allies. Several Iraqi political leaders allied with Abdul-Mahdi told Arab News that an agreement overseen by Gen, Qassem Soleimani, the powerful Iranian military commander, was made to keep Abdul-Mahdi in his post until the end of the crisis.

Soleimani, who commands the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, is accused of leading the crackdown on demonstrators in Baghdad when they first erupted.

“All the Iraqi political parties involved in the government were clearly informed that they are not allowed to take any step to resign Abdul-Mahdi now,” a prominent Shiite governmental advisor closed to Abdul-Mahdi told Arab News.

“At the first days of the crisis (demonstrations), we suggested to ask the prime minister to resign to calm the demonstrators and gain some time, but Haj (Soleimani) rejected this.

“He (Soleimani) said in front of most of the prominent political leaders that he is committed to protecting Abdel-Mahdi to the end and would not allow him to fall because of the protests.

“He said he would agree on the resignation of Abdul-Mahdi just after the end of the crisis. Maybe after two months and Abdul-Mahdi knew and agreed on this.”



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[Qassem Soleimani](#)

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[Iraq protests](#)

Iraq students join rallies as pressure on government swells Iraqi security forces used 'excessive force' during protests that killed 157 -government inquiry