

[Britain to halt new defense export licenses to Turkey: UK foreign minister](#)

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Tue, 2019-10-15 10:52

LONDON: Britain is to halt new arms export licenses to Turkey as a result of concern over its military operation against Kurdish forces in northeast Syria, the foreign minister Dominic Raab said on Tuesday.

“The UK government takes its arm export control responsibilities very seriously and in this case, of course, we will keep our defense exports to Turkey under very careful and continual review,” Raab told parliament.

“No further export licenses to Turkey for items that might be used in military operations in Syria will be granted while we conduct that review.”



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US demands Syria cease-fire, slaps sanctions on Turkey over incursion
EU countries stop short of arms embargo for Turkey

[UAE and Russia sign deals worth \\$1.3bn during Putin's Abu Dhabi visit](#)

Tue, 2019-10-15 10:52

ABU DHABI: Vladimir Putin signed deals worth more than \$1.3 billion with the United Arab Emirates on Tuesday as his Gulf tour came to an end in Abu Dhabi.

The Russian president arrived in the UAE's capital earlier in the day, following his visit to Saudi Arabia where he met King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Riyadh.

Putin was greeted by the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, at the Presidential Airport with a 21-gun salute.



Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed with Russian President Vladimir Putin during arrival honors. (AFP)

He then arrived at the Presidential Palace Qasr Al-Watan where there was an official welcoming ceremony.

The pair struck six agreements, including one on shared investments between Russia's sovereign wealth fund and the Emirati investment fund Mubadala.

Deals worth more than \$1.3 billion, notably in the energy, advanced technology and health sectors, were tabled during Putin's visit, according to the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF).

"You will not be disappointed by your Russian partners," Putin said as he arrived.

Sheikh Mohammed tweeted: "This historic visit reflects the strength of UAE-Russia relations, which we will continue to jointly promote at all levels for the mutual benefit of our nations."

I welcome President Vladimir Putin as an honoured guest to the UAE. This historic visit reflects the strength of UAE-Russia relations, which we will continue to jointly promote at all levels for the mutual benefit of our nations. pic.twitter.com/tFVGXuzKsC

– محمد بن زايد (@MohamedBinZayed) [October 15, 2019](https://twitter.com/MohamedBinZayed/status/1174444444)

"Among the Gulf countries, the UAE is the leader in terms of trade with Russia," Kremlin adviser Yuri Ushakov told reporters ahead of the Gulf tour.

In 2018, commerce between the two countries tabled some \$1.7 billion.

As Putin made his way to the presidential palace, jets painted the sky white, blue and red – the colours of the Russian flag – and cannons fired a ceremonial salute.

The streets of Abu Dhabi were lined with Emirati and Russian flags, while road signs that usually display traffic warnings instead greeted Putin in Arabic and Russian.

Putin and Sheikh Mohammed also met Emirati astronaut Hazza Al-Mansoori, who last month became the first Arab to reach the International Space Station on board a Russian rocket.

"We are ready to continue providing all the necessary assistance to the United Arab Emirates in the space sector," Putin told Sheikh Mohammed.

المقر الرئيسي لأدنوك يزدان بصورتي #محمد_بن_زايد و #بوتين بمناسبة
زيارة الرئيس الروسي
للدولة. #الأسبوع_الإماراتي_الروسي#العلاقات_الإماراتية_الروسية#الإمارات_تر
جب_بالرئيس_بوتين #وام pic.twitter.com/juYUGbFoFP

– وكالة أنباء الإمارات (@wamnews) [October 14, 2019](https://twitter.com/wamnews/status/1174444444)

In the build up to his visit Abu Dhabi lit up its famous landmarks with colors of the Russian flag to mark Putin's return to the UAE, his first official visit since 2007.

#أبوظبيي تضيء أبرز معالمها بألوان علم جمهورية روسيا الاتحادية احتفاءً
بزيارة الرئيس الروسي فلاديمير بوتين إلى دولة الإمارات العربية
المتحدة. #الإمارات_ترحب_بالرئيس_بوتين pic.twitter.com/IA4eiCoujI

– Abu Dhabi Government Media Office (@admediaoffice) [October 14, 2019](#)

ADNOC's headquarters at the Abu Dhabi Corniche was displaying at its facade a huge LED portrait of Putin and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed in a firm handshake – apparently taken during the latter's visit to Moscow in 2017 – as well as the Russian flag.

Other landmarks that also draped their buildings with Russia's flag colors were Emirates Palace, Marina Mall, Khalifa University, Capital Gate Hotel, Abu Dhabi Global Market and the UAE Cultural Foundation.

"The visit reflects the strong overall strategic partnership between the two countries and will enhance their cooperation in vital sectors," Sergei Kuznetsov, the Russian ambassador to the UAE, earlier said, adding that the visit will strengthen the relations between the two countries, especially in light of their strategic partnership.

Kuznetsov also stressed that the Russian president's visit to the UAE represented a marked progress in the bilateral relations between the two countries.

*With AFP













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UAE, Russia discuss regional cooperation Abu Dhabi's Mubadala flexes muscles

in Russia

[Erdogan vows no Daesh fighters will escape Syria](#)

Author:

AFP

ID:

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Tue, 2019-10-15 07:39

ISTANBUL: Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan vowed not to allow any Daesh fighters to escape northern Syria, in an editorial published Tuesday, following fears from Western nations over its offensive in the region.

"We will ensure that no ISIS (Islamic State) fighters leave northeastern Syria," Erdogan wrote in the Wall Street Journal.

But he added that Western countries were hypocritical to worry that Turkey's operation against Kurdish militants risked a mass escape of jihadists.

"The same countries that lecture Turkey on the virtues of combating ISIS today, failed to stem the influx of foreign terrorist fighters in 2014 and 2015," Erdogan wrote.

The United States slapped sanctions on Turkey Monday as it demanded an end to the military operation, accusing its NATO partner of putting civilians at risk and allowing the release of extremists.

Kurdish authorities claim the Turkish assault makes it difficult to maintain security at their detention centers.

They say 800 Daesh family members escaped a camp at Ain Issa on Sunday, and five jihadists broke out of another prison on Friday.

Turkey says Kurdish forces have deliberately set free detainees "to fuel chaos in the area." Some relatives of Daesh family members have made the same claim to AFP.

Ankara has vowed to take control of all detention centers in its operational area. "We are prepared to cooperate with source countries and international organizations on the rehabilitation of foreign terrorist fighters' spouses and children," Erdogan wrote in the Wall Street Journal editorial.



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Kurds 'may be releasing' Daesh prisoners in Syria to get US involved:
TrumpTurkey to go its own way on Syria safe zone: Erdoğan

[Scramble for Syria after US withdrawal](#)

Author:

Reuters

ID:

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Mon, 2019-10-14 01:50

ANKARA: As Ankara pressed on with its offensive in northeastern Syria amid international criticism, Washington announced some 1,000 soldiers were withdrawn from the zone.

With the US departure, the attention turns to how the regional actors, especially Turkey and Syria, will operate in their zones of influence in the war-torn country where the possible escape of Daesh fighters from prisons could result in more chaos.

Some experts claim that with the US decision to withdraw its forces, the

territorial claim of northeastern Syria by the Kurdish YPG militia and its political wing, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), has finished.

Turkey considers the SDF and YPG to be terrorists allied with the PKK, who have been involved in a bloody campaign for autonomy against Turkish states for decades. The PKK is listed as a terror group by Turkey, the EU and the US.

But, whether some 50,000 YPG fighters will be integrated into the Syrian Army or will try to maintain their autonomy is still a matter of concern.

Mazloum Abdi, commander-in-chief of the SDF, recently wrote for Foreign Policy that the Kurds are finally ready to partner with Assad and Putin.

Yury Barmin, an analyst at the Russian International Affairs Council, said: "Damascus and the SDF struck a deal at the Russian base in Hmeymim to let the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) enter the Kurdish-controlled area in the northeast and deploy at the Syrian-Turkish border. The SAA is set to take control over Manbij, Kobane and Qamishli."

However, Barmin told Arab News that a deal between Damascus and the SDF would greatly contribute to a buffer zone that Turkish President Recep Yayıp Erdogan intends to create in northern Syria, allowing Kurds to take some areas along the border without directly antagonizing Ankara. This policy, Barmin added, would be unacceptable to Moscow.

"There are now lots of moving targets and the goal of the Syrian Army – whether it will take some strategic cities or control the whole border along Turkey – is unclear for now. As Russian President Vladimir Putin is on his official visit to Saudi Arabia, his decision for Syria will be clearer when he returns home," he said.

HIGHLIGHT

Some experts claim that with the US decision to withdraw its forces, the territorial claim of northeastern Syria by the Kurdish YPG militia and its political wing, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), has finished.

Barmin also noted that Russia let Erdogan operate the Adana agreement to a certain extent, under which Turkey has the right to conduct cross-border operations.

"But now, Russia would like to show Turkey its own red lines in the region," he said.

However, Navvar Saban, a military analyst at the Omran Center for Strategic Studies in Istanbul, said that the Syrian regime is not capable of striking a deal without being backed by Russians, and that Moscow would not want to lose its relationship with Ankara.

“Russians always talk about the Adana agreement. We are now talking about a renewal and reactivation of the agreement with new specifications to allow Turkey to go deeper into Syrian territories. In this way, the Russians will have a bigger chance to allow the Syrian regime and Turkey to communicate. It is something that will open the diplomatic channels,” Saban said.

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump tweeted: “Big sanctions on Turkey coming! Do people really think we should go to war with NATO Member Turkey? Never ending wars will end!”

Joe Macaron, a resident fellow at the Arab Center in Washington, said that if the US is completely out of the way, Russia and Turkey will have to either agree or contest each other to take over the US territorial control in northeast Syria. He added that this might be the most crucial race in the coming weeks.

Concerning the diplomatic channels between Damascus and Ankara, Macaron thinks that the channels were and will remain open between Moscow and Ankara since they have common interests beyond Syria.

“If Turkey had no other option, it might have to settle for controlling a few border towns, but this means Erdogan can no longer effectively implement his plan to return Syrian refugees, most notably without funding from the international community. Ankara is more likely to succeed in striking such a deal with Moscow than with Washington,” Macaron told Arab News.

Many experts agree that the Syrian chessboard will be determined predominantly by Russian moves.

“Assad has no say in what will happen next, Russia is the decision maker and there is little the Syrian regime can do unless Iran forcefully intervenes to impact the Russian-Turkish dynamics in the northeast,” Macaron said.



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Turkey and proxies advance deep into Syria
France, Germany halting arms exports to Turkey over its offensive against Kurds in Syria

[Kais Saied wins Tunisia presidency by 'significant margin'](#)

Author:

AFP

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Mon, 2019-10-14 16:40

TUNIS: Tunisia's election commission said a preliminary count shows conservative law professor Kais Saied has won the country's presidential election by a significant margin.

The commission reported Monday that Saied, who hasn't held elected office before, received 72.71% of the vote. His opponent, media mogul Nabil Karoui, got 27.29%.

The results confirm exit polls from Sunday's election.

Nabil Bafoun, head of the electoral commission, said "by looking at the result ... and knowing that it represents an absolute majority for this second round of the presidential elections, we, the Tunisian electoral commission, declare Mister Kais Saied winner of the presidential elections."

The commission said that Saied got a majority of the votes in each of the 33 electoral districts. He exceeded 90% in six traditionally very conservative southern districts.

The 61-year-old Saied is an independent outsider but has support from moderate party Ennahdha, which won Tunisia's parliamentary election last week.

He has promised to overhaul the country's governing structure to give more power to young people and local governments.

Karoui, 56, told supporters Sunday the race wasn't over because his legal team would explore options. He was arrested Aug. 23 in a corruption investigation and released with only two days left to campaign.

French President Emmanuel Macron congratulated Saied for his election in a phone call Monday and wished him "success for Tunisia."

Macron stressed the Tunisian people's "democratic mobilization" over the past several weeks. He told Saied that he intends to pursue and enhance the partnership between the two countries.

Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi congratulated the Tunisian people and the elected president in a written statement.

If no legal action is taken to challenge the results, the electoral body is set to announce the definitive vote count on Thursday. Tunisia's parliament will then hold an extraordinary session during which the newly elected president will be sworn in and will formally start his five-year term.

The presidential vote was held early following the July death in office of President Beji Caid Essebsi.



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Tunisian election gives few clues to shape of next government
Heart of Tunisia party claims victory in parliamentary election