

# Kurds capture 8 extremists including US teenager

Author:

Associated Press

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Wed, 2019-01-09 (All day)

BEIRUT: A Syrian Kurdish militia says its fighters have captured eight foreign fighters with the Daesh group in eastern Syria, including an American teenager.

The force known as the People's Protection Units, or YPG, says the militants were captured in a special operation in the eastern province of Deir Ezzor, where Daesh extremists are still holding on to pockets of territory.

Among the eight are an American, a German, a Russian, a national from the Ukraine as well as Tajik and Uzbek nationals.

In a statement, the YPG identified the 16-year-old American teenager as Soulay Noah Su. No other details were immediately provided.

On Sunday, the Kurdish group announced the capture of five fighters, including two US citizens, one of whom has been identified as a former school teacher from Houston.



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## [‘Hope for further Yemen negotiations’ UN envoy tells Security Council](#)

Wed, 2019-01-09 18:13

LONDON: UN Yemen envoy Martin Griffiths told the Security Council on Wednesday that both sides have largely stuck to the Hodeidah ceasefire and there has been a significant decrease in hostilities.

The briefing was the first since the agreement struck during talks in Sweden last month swung into effect.

The internationally recognized Yemeni government and the Arab coalition providing it military support against enemy Houthi militants, have accused the Iran-backed group of dozens of violations of the ceasefire.

And while Griffiths acknowledged there had been some problems but he was still “hopeful” that further negotiations will be held “in the near future.”

Talks are ongoing on a redeployment of forces from Hodeidah, providing security in the city and opening up access routes to allow humanitarian convoys to reach millions in dire need of food aid, he added.

A meeting will be held in Amman next week to follow up on an agreed prisoner swap that could pave the way to an airlift of “many, many thousands” of detainees from both sides.

“It is my view and it is shared by the leadership of both parties, but also others, that substantial progress, particularly on Hodeida of course, is something that we would like to see before we reconvene the next consultations,” said Griffiths.

Griffiths briefed the Security Council after a round of shuttle diplomacy in the region including talks with militia leaders in Sanaa and President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi in Riyadh on shoring up the ceasefire deal.

The United Nations is working to schedule a new round of talks, possibly in Kuwait, to build on the Stockholm agreement and advance toward a final deal to end the conflict.

The war between the Houthis and troops loyal to the government started when the Houthis seized the capital Sanaa in 2014.

The conflict has unleashed the world's worst humanitarian crisis, according to the UN, which says 80 percent of the population are in need of aid.

Nearly 10 million people are just one step away from famine, UN aid chief Mark Lowcock told the council.

"Millions of Yemenis are hungrier, sicker and more vulnerable than a year ago," said Lowcock, who stressed that while the political process was important "it does not in itself feed a single starving child."

The Security Council is considering the creation of a new observer mission to Yemen to monitor the ceasefire in Hodeida, oversee the pullback of forces and allow the delivery of humanitarian aid.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has proposed the deployment of up to 75 observers to Yemen for an initial period of six months to shore up the ceasefire while talks on a broader peace deal are held.

An advance team of about 16 international monitors, led by Dutch general Patrick Cammaert, has been deployed in Yemen, under a resolution adopted last month that endorsed the Stockholm agreement.

*\*With AFP*



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15 Houthis killed attempting to launch missile at Saudi Arabia from Yemen  
UN envoy holds talks with Yemen president amid preparations to boost Hodeidah monitoring team

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## [Consultations on a National Child Sex Offender Register](#)

The Australian Government has commenced national consultations on a proposal to establish a National Public Register of Child Sex Offenders.

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## [UN envoy holds talks with Yemen president amid preparations to boost Hodeidah monitoring team](#)

Author:

Wed, 2019-01-09 00:10

JEDDAH: The United Nations envoy for Yemen held talks Tuesday with the country's president, as he sought to shore up a truce in key port Hodeidah.

Martin Griffiths met with the Yemeni authorities after seeing Houthi militant leaders in Sanaa on a tour aimed at ensuring both sides make good on a ceasefire deal agreed in Sweden last month.

Yemen's internationally recognized leader Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi expressed his "support for the efforts and work" of Griffiths at the talks in the Saudi capital, the Saba news agency reported.

The head of the president's office Abdullah al-Alimi wrote on Twitter that Hadi remained committed to the Sweden accord and stood ready to open up "all humanitarian access."

Griffiths is set to brief the UN Security Council Wednesday on the ceasefire deal, AFP reported.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has asked the Security Council to approve the deployment of up to 75 observers to Hodeidah for six months to monitor the ceasefire, Reuters reported.

The council will need to take action on Guterres' request by about Jan. 20, when a 30-day authorization for an advance monitoring team led by retired Dutch General Patrick Cammaert expires.

It was not immediately clear how many monitors were currently on the ground with Cammaert.

The United Nations has said the monitors are not uniformed or armed.

In his Dec. 31 proposal to the council, seen by Reuters, Guterres described the proposed 75-strong team as “a nimble presence” to monitor compliance of the deal and establish and assess facts and conditions on the ground.

The UN has said the truce has largely held in the city since the agreement came into force on Dec. 18.

The pro-Hadi Arab coalition, which includes Saudi Arabia, has accused the Houthis of dozens of violations of the truce.

Griffiths is looking to push on with steps agreed in Sweden, including the redeployment of rival forces from Hodeidah.

He is also hoping to bring the sides together again for a new round of peace talks later this month.

The war in Yemen was sparked when the Houthis seized the capital Sanaa in 2014.

The conflict has unleashed the world’s worst humanitarian crisis, according to the UN, which says 14 million Yemenis are on the brink of famine.

*\*With AFP and Reuters*



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UN envoy arrives in Yemen to push Hodeidah truce  
Yemen government following up reports of aid looting

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## [Children tortured in Iraq Kurdistan for 'Daesh links'](#)

Author:

Tue, 2019-01-08 22:25

BAGHDAD: Security forces in Iraqi Kurdistan have been “torturing children” to force them to confess to having links with Daesh, Human Rights Watch said on Tuesday.

The rights group said it interviewed 23 boys aged between 14 and 17 who were charged with, or convicted of, belonging to Daesh, and that 16 of them said they had been “tortured” during questioning.

Some boys said members of the Kurdish security forces known as Asayesh beat them with plastic pipes, electric cables or rods while others said they were subjected to electric shocks or a painful stress position dubbed the “scorpion,” the watchdog said.

“Several boys said the torture continued over consecutive days, and only ended when they confessed” to involvement with Daesh, it said.

“Most said they had no access to a lawyer and they were not allowed to read the confessions Asayesh wrote and forced them to sign,” it added. It said the punishment inflicted by security forces of the Kurdistan Regional Government in northern Iraq took place in 2017 and 2018 despite promises by authorities to investigate the torture claims.

“Nearly two years after the Kurdistan Regional Government promised to investigate the torture of child detainees, it is still occurring with alarming frequency,” said Jo Becker, children’s rights advocacy director at HRW.

The watchdog said its staff interviewed the boys during a November visit to a detention center in Irbil, where 63 children are being held.

A senior Kurdish official dismissed the allegations.

Dindar Zebari, international affairs adviser to the Kurdish government, told AFP that “HRW never visited” the detention center.

According to HRW, most of the boys said their interrogators told them what they should confess and many said they gave false testimony only to stop the torture.

“My confession says that I joined Daesh for 16 days, but actually I didn’t join at all,” a 16-year-old child told HRW.

A 14-year-old said: “First they said I should say I was with Daesh, so I agreed. Then they told me I had to say I worked for Daesh for three months. I told them I was not part of Daesh, but they said, ‘No, you have to say it’.”

The boy said that after two hours of interrogation and torture he agreed to their demands.

“The Kurdistan authorities should immediately end all torture of child detainees and investigate those responsible,” HRW said.



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