

# Trump gives no timetable for Syria exit, wants to protect Kurds

Wed, 2019-01-02 21:29

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump said on Wednesday the United States would get out of Syria "over a period of time" and wants to protect the US-backed Kurdish fighters in the country as Washington draws down troops. Trump did not provide a timetable for the planned military exit from Syria, which he announced last month against the advice of top national security aides and without consulting lawmakers or US allies participating in anti-Daesh operations.

The decision prompted Defense Secretary Jim Mattis to resign.

During a Cabinet meeting at the White House in front of reporters, Trump said he had never discussed a reported four-month timetable for the withdrawal of 2,000 American troops stationed in Syria amid a battle against Daesh militants.

In recent days, Trump appeared to back off from any hasty pullout and stressed that the operation would be slow. "We're slowly sending our troops back home to be with their families, while at the same time fighting Isis [Daesh] remnants," he said on Twitter on Monday.

Republican Senator Lindsey Graham said he came out of a lunch with Trump feeling reassured about the Syria policy.

Graham told reporters that Trump was committed to making sure Turkey did not clash with the Kurdish YPG forces once US troops leave Syria, and was assuring the NATO ally that it would have a buffer zone in the region to help protect its own interests.

Turkey views the YPG as a branch of its own Kurdish separatist movement and is threatening to launch an offensive against the group, igniting fears of significant civilian casualties.

US commanders planning the US withdrawal are recommending that YPG fighters battling Daesh be allowed to keep US-supplied weapons, according to US officials.

That proposal would likely anger Turkey, where Trump's national security adviser, John Bolton, is expected to hold talks this week.



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## [Over 60 wounded in Algeria football clashes](#)

Author:

AFP

ID:

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Wed, 2019-01-02 16:59

ALGIERS: More than 60 people, mostly police officers, were wounded in clashes with supporters at a football match in Algeria, local authorities said on Wednesday.

The fixture between top division club MC Alger and third league Village Moussa was marred by repeated stone-throwing before the referee called it off in extra time over fears for players' safety, government newspaper El-Moudjahid reported.

The round of 16 Algeria Cup match took place in Jijel, 360 kilometers (220

miles) east of Algiers, where Village Moussa fans started throwing stones after their team conceded a third goal in the first half. Security forces responded with tear gas and ensuing clashes wounded 62 people including 45 police officers. Jijel Civil Protection official Ahlem Boumala told the Algeria Press Service the injuries were caused by “stones and projectiles.” Algeria has long been plagued by violence, sometimes deadly, with fans targeting both police and players. In mid-November around 40 people including 18 policemen were wounded after a first division match in the capital city. The previous month, more than 80 people including 30 police officers were injured after fans invaded the pitch at a top-flight match in Bordj Bou Arreridj, around 200km south-east of Algiers. In 2014 Albert Ebosse, a Cameroon striker with JS Kabylie, was killed on the field by a projectile thrown from the stands. The phenomenon has continued despite sanctions, fair-play campaigns and an interior ministry commission of enquiry.



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## Honduras to talk with Israel, US on Jerusalem embassy

Author:

Reuters

ID:

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BRASILIA: Honduras will hold talks with Israel, joined by the United States, aimed at opening an embassy in Jerusalem, the countries said on Tuesday, as the small Central American nation looks to follow US President Donald Trump's much-criticized move.

US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez held a meeting in the Brazilian capital on the sidelines of the inauguration of right-wing Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro

The three agreed to hold meetings in the capitals of each country "to advance the decision process to open embassies in both Tegucigalpa and Jerusalem," as well as "strengthen political relations and coordinate development cooperation in Honduras," the countries said in a joint statement.

The right-leaning Hernandez is the latest leader to consider following Trump's decision to move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to the contested city of Jerusalem, which infuriated Palestinians and drew international condemnation.

Hernandez told reporters the trilateral talks represented "an important political alliance."

Trump has repeatedly threatened to cut off aid to Honduras, a poor nation of less than 10 million people, over caravans of migrants crossing Mexico heading for the US border.

Guatemala, another country seeking closer US ties, quickly joined Trump's decision and moved its embassy to Jerusalem just two days after the US opened offices in May. Paraguay also followed, but a new government backtracked in September.

Netanyahu said on Sunday that Bolsonaro told him it was a question of "when, not if" Brazil would move its embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.





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NetanyahuAustralia move on Jerusalem slammed

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## [Turkey detains two French Daesh suspects wanted by Interpol: state media](#)

Author:

AFP

ID:

1546451275105903600

Wed, 2019-01-02 17:39

ANKARA: Turkish authorities detained 12 suspects over alleged links to the

Daesh group including two French women sought by Interpol, state media reported on Wednesday.

The suspects, including French, Syrian and Algerian citizens, were taken into custody after anti-terror raids in the northwestern Turkish province of Bursa, state news agency Anadolu said.

Among those caught were three women including the two French women who had red and blue Interpol notices issued against them, Anadolu and the private DHA news agency reported.

Some of the suspects had been in Syria with the extremist group before moving to Bursa, the agency said, without giving further detail.

Another suspect was believed to have been a guard for an Daesh commander. Five of the suspects have been sent to deportation centers, Anadolu said. Bursa is Turkey's fourth most populous province with more two million residents.

There have been a series of raids against Daesh suspects in Turkey in the past two weeks, especially ahead of New Year celebrations.

Earlier on Wednesday, a man and a woman were detained in the central province of Kayseri, accused of having Daesh links and believed to be preparing an attack on New Year celebrations after arriving in Turkey from France three months earlier.

And six foreign nationals were also taken into custody in the eastern province of Elazig over suspected ties to Daesh, Anadolu reported.

Four of the foreigners – whose identities or countries of origin were not given – were deported, the agency said, quoting unnamed security sources. Turkey was hit by a series of terror attacks in 2015 and 2016 blamed on Daesh and Kurdish militants.

The last terror attack claimed by Daesh was during New Year celebrations in 2017 when a gunman killed 39 people in an elite Istanbul nightclub.



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