

War on militants 'won't end unless West tackles root causes'

Author:

Sat, 2018-12-15 23:36

WASHINGTON: Western powers fighting militant groups around the globe are condemned to a never-ending battle if they only tackle the symptoms and not the underlying causes of militant insurgency, experts say.

"Beyond the tactical victories on the ground, the current strategy is failing," said Katherine Zimmerman, who wrote a recent report for the American Enterprise Institute.

"Every soldier and intelligence analyst that has worked on this problem understands what is happening," Zimmerman told AFP.

"They understand that what they are doing is a temporary solution. It's ending the immediate threat but not stabilizing or moving us forward. The problem comes down to policy and politics," she noted.

"It's easy to say, 'We're going to kill the person responsible for making the bomb.' It is much more difficult to say that our partner government has disenfranchised this group and it's one of the reasons why this person joins the terrorist group. And now he is the bomb maker."

Driven from lands it once held sway over in Syria and Iraq, Daesh has returned to its origins as an underground militant outfit because the conditions that spawned it – a deep discontent among most Iraqis and Syrians – have persisted, experts say.

"The West is on the road to winning all the battles and losing the war," warned Zimmerman.

In a report last month on the resurgence of Daesh as a clandestine guerrilla group, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) said that while the US and allied governments have weakened some groups like Daesh, "many of the underlying causes have not been adequately addressed."

Those root causes include a "fragile state with weak or ineffective governing institutions" in areas affected by militant activity, where the extremists can establish a sanctuary, the CSIS experts said.

They took maps showing areas where Al-Qaeda and Daesh were active and compared them to maps displaying "government effectiveness," based on World Bank statistics.

The result was clear: Most of the countries where the insurgents are active – Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia – are also in the bottom 10 percent for government effectiveness.

At a conference this week in Washington, retired Marine Gen. John Allen – who once commanded US forces in Afghanistan and now heads the prestigious Brookings Institution – said the West had to get ahead of the issue and ask, “Where should we be looking for the next problems?”

“We should spend a great deal more time looking at those areas that are in fragile or failing states,” said Allen, who also served as presidential envoy to the international coalition battling Daesh.

“We have to recognize the hotspots where the human condition prompts the radicalization of large sectors of the population,” he added.

“Often we join the conversation when the process of radicalization has been in place for quite a long time.”

Allen noted that the problem is “a development issue, much more than a counter-terrorism issue.”



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US-backed forces expel Daesh from east Syria hub
UN investigation delves into Daesh's crimes against Yazidis

Australia move on Jerusalem slammed

Author:

Sat, 2018-12-15 22:55

RAMALLAH, SYDNEY: The Palestinian leadership on Saturday described as “irresponsible” Australia’s recognition of West Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, saying it violated international law.

Canberra earlier recognized West Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, but a contentious embassy shift from Tel Aviv will not occur until a peace settlement is achieved, said Prime Minister Scott Morrison.

“We look forward to moving our embassy to West Jerusalem when practical, in support of and after final status of determination,” Morrison said, adding that work on a new site for the embassy was under way.

“All of Jerusalem remains a final status issue for negotiations, while East Jerusalem, under international law, is an integral part of the occupied Palestinian territory,” he added.

“Furthermore, recognizing our commitment to a two-state solution, the Australian government is also resolved to acknowledge the aspirations of the Palestinian people for a future state with its capital in East Jerusalem,” he added.

The country became one of just a few to follow US President Donald Trump’s lead and recognize the contested city as Israel’s capital.

Australia said it would open a defense and trade office in the west of the holy city and also committed to recognizing a future state of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Both Israelis and Palestinians claim Jerusalem as their capital.

Most foreign nations avoided moving embassies there to prevent inflaming peace talks on the city’s final status – until Trump unilaterally moved the US Embassy there earlier this year.

Senior Palestinian official Saeb Erekat said in a statement that the Australian decision to open a trade office in the city violated a UN resolution.

“From the beginning, we’ve perceived the Australian government’s decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital as one wherein petty domestic politics steer irresponsible policies that contradict world peace and security,” he said in a statement.

Morrison first floated the shift in foreign policy in October, the move angered Australia’s immediate neighbor Indonesia – the world’s most populous Muslim nation.

The issue has put a halt on years-long negotiations on a bilateral trade deal.

Canberra on Friday told its citizens traveling to Indonesia to “exercise a high degree of caution,” warning of protests in the capital Jakarta and popular holiday hotspots, including Bali.

Morrison pointed to Australia’s military history in the region, and the country’s interest in a “rules-based” order in the Middle East, to support the shift in foreign policy.



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Australia recognizes west Jerusalem as capital of Israel
Australia warns citizens ahead of expected Jerusalem move

[Nobel laureate Murad to build hospital in her hometown in Iraq](#)

Author:
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Fri, 2018-12-14 23:43

SINJAR, Iraq: Nadia Murad, an Iraqi Yazidi woman held as a sex slave by Daesh militants who won this year's Nobel Peace Prize, said on Friday she intended to use the prize money to build a hospital for victims of sexual abuse in her hometown.

The Yazidi survivor was speaking to a crowd of hundreds in Sinjar, her hometown in northern Iraq.

"With the money I got from the Nobel Peace prize, I will build a hospital in Sinjar to treat ill people, mainly widows and women who were exposed to sexual abuses by Daesh militants," she told the crowd and gathered journalists.

She thanked the Iraqi and Kurdistan governments for agreeing to her plan and said she would be contacting humanitarian organizations "soon" to start construction.

Murad was awarded the \$1 million prize alongside Congolese doctor Denis Mukwege for their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict.

She was one of about 7,000 women and girls captured in northwest Iraq in August 2014 and held by Daesh in Mosul, where she was tortured and raped. She escaped after three months and reached Germany, from where she campaigned extensively to appeal for support for the Yazidi community.

The Yazidi area in Sinjar had previously been home to about 400,000 people, mostly Yazidis and Arab Sunnis.

In a matter of days, more than 3,000 Yazidis were killed and about 6,800 kidnapped, either sold into slavery or conscripted to fight for Daesh as the religious minority came under attack.



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[Nadia Murad](#)

Nobel Peace Prize winner Murad urges world to fight genocide
Nobel laureate returns to Iraq, pledges to work for peace

[Israel destroys house of Palestinian charged with killing soldier](#)

Author:

Reuters

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Sat, 2018-12-15 10:17

EL AMARI REFUGEE CAMP, West Bank: Israeli forces on Saturday demolished the family home of a Palestinian charged with killing an Israeli soldier in the occupied West Bank, the military and witnesses said.

Israel says Islam Abu Humaid, 32, threw a 40 pound (18 kg) marble plate from a rooftop, killing an Israeli special forces sergeant, Ronen Lubarsky, 20, during a May arrest raid in El Amari refugee camp in the Palestinian city of

Ramallah.

Israeli forces arrived at the El Amari camp before dawn on Saturday, sealed off the four-story Abu Humaid house and destroyed it, the military said in a statement.

The Abu Humaid family home has been destroyed before and rebuilt. Two other Abu Humaid sons are in Israeli custody, charged with the killings of five Israelis, and another two face lengthy incarceration for serious security offenses.

A sixth Abu Humaid son was killed by Israeli forces in 1994 after himself being involved in a deadly ambush against an Israeli intelligence officer in the West Bank.

According to the indictment against him, Islam Abu Humaid told interrogators that he wanted to avenge the injury of one of his brothers in a previous Israeli army raid.

"What can we do? This is an enemy who thinks that by doing such actions they will terrorize us and make us fear them," said Islam's mother, Latifa Abu Humaid.

"On the contrary, our animosity becomes stronger, and with it our perseverance and strength."

Israeli rights groups have criticized family-home demolitions of Palestinian attackers as acts of vengeance and collective punishment.

Israel's Supreme Court has largely upheld the demolition policy. Israeli officials have termed it both punitive and a deterrence to potential attackers.

"The IDF (Israel Defense Forces) will continue operating in order to thwart terror and maintain security in the area," the military said.

The Palestinian Foreign Ministry condemned the demolition.

Tensions flared this week in the West Bank with a string of Palestinian attacks that killed an Israeli baby and two Israeli soldiers and Israeli forces shot dead four suspected Palestinian assailants.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Thursday that in response to the attacks, slated demolitions would be sped up.

Peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians broke down in 2014.



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Lebanese wary as Israel destroys Hezbollah border tunnels
Australia recognizes west Jerusalem as capital of Israel

[Turkey vows to keep striking PKK targets in Iraq](#)

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Sat, 2018-12-15 (All day)

ISTANBUL: Turkey says it will continue to defend itself against terrorists after its strikes against Kurdish militants in northern Iraq sparked criticism from Baghdad.

Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman Hami Aksoy said Saturday that Turkey expected neighboring Iraq to fulfill its responsibilities in combatting the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK. He says Turkey will invoke its "legitimate

right to self-defense” if Iraq “does not do what’s necessary.”

Iraq summoned Turkey’s ambassador on Friday to protest Turkish air raids on Iraq’s Sinjar and Makhmour mountains, where the PKK operates. The group has waged an insurgency inside Turkey for more than three decades but also fought against the Daesh group in Iraq.

The Turkish Defense Ministry says Thursday’s strikes targeted PKK bases that supply Kurdish positions in northern Syria.



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Turkey targets military over alleged Gulen links
Turkey will enter Syria’s Manbij if US doesn’t remove YPG fighters: Erdogan