

# After Baghdadi, Turkey copes with Daesh threat

Author:

Tue, 2019-10-29 01:35

ANAKARA: After Daesh leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi's death, the terror group still poses a security threat to regional countries, including Turkey.

Turkey's location on the transit route of foreign fighters on their way to join Daesh poses a serious security risk.

The compound where Al-Baghdadi was killed in a US operation was just a few miles from the Turkish border in a small village called Barisha.

Turkish counterterrorism police detained 20 foreign nationals in Ankara on Monday over suspicions of affiliation with Daesh, as the country fears possible revenge acts by the terror group after US President Donald Trump thanked Turkey for help in killing Al-Baghdadi.

The Daesh-linked suspects, allegedly from Syria, will be referred to the migration office for deportation.

At least 315 people have been killed so far in attacks claimed by Daesh in Turkey, where the terrorist group has targeted civilians, including Arab tourists, in suicide bombings and armed attacks. Some 1,338 others have been wounded in the attacks.

Many metropolitan municipalities, including Ankara – where Daesh carried out a bomb attack, claiming the lives of 107 people – heightened their security measures in public areas ahead of critical dates, such as Oct. 29 for Republic Day celebrations.

Nearly one-third of the 750 Daesh terrorists released by the YPG in Syria have surrendered to Turkey, Defense Minister Hulusi Akar announced on Monday.

For four years, Turkey conducted over 2,000 operations against Daesh and about 1,200 individuals were arrested and convicted over their connections to the terror group.

Michael Horowitz, a Middle East security analyst with the Le Beck consultancy, said Daesh will likely seek to carry out attacks to balance the death of its leader.

"The group did carry out such a wave of 'revenge attacks' following the collapse of its 'caliphate' in Iraq and Syria," he told Arab News.

However, Horowitz added that the group will mostly focus on conflict areas including Iraq, Syria, Libya and Afghanistan.

Halid Abdurrahman, a researcher and analyst on the Middle East and North

Africa, said that the elimination of Daesh leaders would motivate its fighters for new attacks.

“The fact that Al-Baghdadi was killed in a US operation where Turkey was involved may render Ankara a target and push security forces toward further operations,” he told Arab News.

According to Abdurrahman, Daesh would prefer easy, “soft” targets.

“The fact that Turkey is still present in Syria with its troops would make the country more accessible and a priority for revenge,” he added.

Oubai Shahbandar, a defense analyst, said that intelligence sharing played an important role in providing US special forces a full picture on Al-Baghdadi’s hideout.

“Covert cooperation between the US and regional allies helped make sure that the operation was a success. In particular, the capture of Ismael Al-Ethawi, a key aide and courier for Al-Baghdadi, by Turkish security forces earlier this year played an instrumental role in the operation’s success.

“Daesh terror attacks have afflicted all countries in the region. Continued intelligence sharing and cooperation against this common threat will continue to be crucial,” he added.



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Remains of Daesh leader Al-Baghdadi buried at sea Saudi Arabia hails US raid that killed Al-Baghdadi

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## [Morocco wants women, minors held in Iraq, Syria to come home](#)

Author:

Associated Press

ID:

1572297652353947300

Mon, 2019-10-28 21:06

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](#)

Author:

AFP

ID:

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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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'