

Somali Shebab urged to join Islamic State

US to conduct counter-Boko Haram ops in Nigeria

WASHINGTON, Oct 17, (Agencies): The United States will conduct surveillance and intelligence operations against Boko Haram inside Nigeria, sources familiar with the plan told AFP Friday, a significant escalation of Washington's role in combatting the Islamist group.

The operations will be carried out as part of the recently announced deployment of up to 300 US military personnel to neighboring Cameroon, officials said.

"This is going to be part of our Boko Haram efforts that will be operating throughout the region", one of the sources said on condition of anonymity.

It will not include boots on the ground or offensive combat, but will see US military operations against Boko Haram in Africa's most populous country for the first time.

"It's surveillance and intelligence gathering, not anything offensive", said the same source.

US President Barack Obama on Wednesday announced he would send up to 300 military personnel to Cameroon. Approximately 145 have already arrived in the country.

The White House has been at pains to stress that personnel would be armed only for self-defense.

Nigeria greeted that announcement as a "welcome development".

President Muhammadu Buhari took office in

Amnesty opens Nigeria office to probe abuse charges

LAGOS, Nigeria, Oct 17, (AP): Amnesty International opened an office Tuesday in Nigeria, promising to investigate allegations of abuses from oil pollution and forced evictions to charges of military killings of civilians in the fight against Boko Haram Islamic extremists.

"From the relatives of the thousands killed and missing in northeast Nigeria to the thousands of villagers in the Niger Delta who cannot plant crops or drink clean water because of oil pollution, Amnesty International will stand in solidarity with all the people in Nigeria who face human rights violations and abuses," said the director of the office in Abuja, the capital, veteran Nigerian career diplomat M.K. Ibrahim.

Nigeria's new government invited the

recruits and the video posted on Twitter on Wednesday tells Shebab fighters that uniting "is of greater benefit to the struggle on the path of Islam" and will "help in defeating the infidels of the world".

The appeal from an unidentified armed fighter is part of a wider courting of al-Shebab. Similar messages came nearly two weeks ago from militant extremists in Iraq, Sinai, Syria, and Yemen.

London-based human rights group into the country, Ibrahim told the AP, after its report accusing Nigeria's military of killing some 800 civilian detainees by shooting, torture, starvation and suffocation. Amnesty named five senior officers it said should be tried for war crimes in its March report.

The Associated Press has reported the deaths of some 3,000 people in military detention within a matter of months in 2013, and the shootings of hundreds of unarmed detainees freed from a barracks in northeastern Maiduguri in a Boko Haram attack last year.

Amnesty had a combative relationship with the previous Nigerian government, headed by Goodluck Jonathan, which denied allegations of gross military abuses.

May vowing to end the violence that has killed scores and spooked much-needed investors in Africa's largest economy and foremost oil producer.

Meanwhile, Nigeria's Boko Haram extremists are urging Somalia's al-Shebab rebels to join them in pledging allegiance to the leader of the Islamic State group, and thus abandon al-Qaida.

Al-Qaida and Islamic State are rivals for jihadi

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Al-Qaida and Islamic State are rivals for jihadi

Clinton backs Obama move on troops

Thousands of Afghans flee Kunduz as violence spreads

KABUL, Oct 17, (Agencies): The young man from the northern Afghan city of Kunduz used to make a decent living doing a dangerous job.

As an informer for Afghanistan's intelligence agency, he posed as a businessman and mingled with Taleban insurgents, gathering GPS data, photos and audio clips of militants.

That all ended on the morning of Sept 28, when hundreds of Taleban fighters besieged the provincial capital, briefly taking control of the city.

They stormed the local headquarters of the National Directorate of Security, where files detailing covert activities were kept, said the 24-year-old, whose name and precise profession have been omitted to protect his identity.

"They captured all our reports. I'm not safe anywhere in Afghanistan."

While his predicament may be worse than most, he is among thousands of Afghans who have fled Kunduz since the Taleban's stunning advance, many of them looking to escape the country altogether and head for Europe.

Now in Kabul, the man says he can never go back. Nor can he stay, fearful the Taleban will come looking for him.

Haggling

He has been haggling with a human smuggler over the \$9,000 passage to Europe, and knows a dozen former colleagues and friends looking to do the same after leaving Kunduz in a hurry.

Since Kunduz fell, some 100,000 residents have fled clashes there between Afghan security forces and insurgents, according to UN estimates, scattering to camps, hotels and relatives' homes across the north and in Kabul.

The flight has helped bring the number of Afghans displaced by fighting to more than one million, as security deteriorates around the country.

This week, the Taleban said it was withdrawing from Kunduz city centre, and the government has started helping some residents to return.

But some say there is no going back, as they are unable to shake the fear of bullets hitting their homes, roads strewn with crude bombs or stories of rape and kidnapping.

Like the more than 120,000 Afghans who have already applied for asylum in greater Europe this year, many want out.

"This is a crisis, to be honest with you," said Abdul Ghafoor, who runs the Afghanistan Migrants Advice and Support

Organization (AMASO) in Kabul.

More and more people come to him asking how to get out. "I ask them, 'Why are you leaving?' They say, 'Look around.'"

For Mohammad Basir, Kunduz had become too risky months before the city fell.

Word reached militants in a nearby district that Basir worked with the United Nations in Kunduz and earned a good living. Neighbours whom he suspected sympathized with the militants started to treat him differently.

After receiving a phone call from a local Taleban commander demanding he resign and start paying the insurgents, Basir relocated to Kabul, and his wife and children managed to join him later after Kunduz fell.

Basir worries the Taleban may have him in their sights, and has been talking to several smugglers about getting to Europe via Iran.

"This time it happened in Kunduz, but this can happen anywhere," he said. "I cannot trust the government. I cannot trust police. I cannot trust anyone."

Long lines outside the passport office have become a fixture in the early mornings in the capital, testament to rising violence that culminated in Kunduz's capitulation, the worst setback for Afghan forces since the insurgency began in 2001.

Even people returning to Afghanistan after spending years abroad are looking to leave again straight away, said AMASO's Ghafoor.

He said the vast majority of returning Afghans his organization helped have left, and more are looking to follow.

Also:

KEENE, New Hampshire: Democratic presidential candidate **Hillary Rodham Clinton** said Friday she supports President **Barack Obama's** decision to keep 5,500 US troops in Afghanistan when he leaves the White House in 2017.

Clinton said Friday in an interview with CNN that Obama's moves were an example of "a leader who has strong convictions about what he would like to see happen but also pays attention to what's going on in the real world."

The president had originally planned to keep only a small US military presence by the end of his presidency. But military leaders have said the Afghans need more support from the US to fight the Taleban and maintain gains made during the past 14 years.

Clinton, who served as Obama's secretary of state during his first term, said the US wants to bring its troops home and "we certainly don't want them engaged in on-the-ground combat. We want them to help support and train the Afghan army."

"So I can't predict where things will be in January of 2017. But I support the president's decision," she said.

Three Palestinians 'killed' while trying to stab Israelis

UN holds emergency meeting, US calls for calm

HEBRON, Oct 17, (AFP): Three Palestinians were shot dead while trying to stab Israelis in east Jerusalem and the West Bank Saturday, as violence that has fuelled international concerns of a full-scale uprising showed no let-up.

The violence that has raged for more than two weeks prompted a "very concerned" US President Barack Obama to call for calm as the UN

Security Council held an emergency meeting Friday.

Including alleged assailants, 40 Palestinians have been killed since the violence erupted on October 1. Seven Israelis have lost their lives. The mounting death toll has prompted fears of a new Palestinian intifada, or uprising, like those of 1987-1993 and 2000-2005, when thousands were killed in near-daily violence.

Two of Saturday's attacks took place in the flashpoint West Bank city of Hebron, where some 500 Jewish settlers live in a heavily guarded enclave in the city centre surrounded by nearly 200,000 Palestinians.

The third was at a checkpoint in a Jewish settlement neighbourhood of Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem.



Palestinians burn tires during clashes with Israeli troops near Ramallah, West Bank on Oct 16. Tensions and violence have been mounting in recent weeks, in part fueled by Palestinian fears that Israel is trying to expand its presence at a major Muslim-run shrine in Jerusalem, a claim Israel has denied. (AP)

In the first Hebron incident, a Palestinian tried to stab a settler before his intended victim, who was unharmed, shot him dead, the army said.

Palestinian security sources identified the assailant as 18-year-old Fadel al-Kawatsmi.

Video circulated by Palestinian activists showed a young man wearing a kippa brandishing a pistol as shots rang out before Israeli soldiers moved in to pull him away from a body lying on the ground.

In the second attack, a Palestinian girl attempted to stab a female Israeli soldier outside a border guard base before being shot dead by her would-be victim, Israeli police said.

The soldier suffered minor injuries to her hand, police spokeswoman Luba Samri said. Palestinian media said her assailant was aged 16.

Troops later opened fire at stone-throwing Palestinian youths in several sectors of Hebron, wounding 11 with rubber bullets and one with a live round, Palestinian medics said.

In east Jerusalem, a Palestinian tried to stab a soldier at a checkpoint in East Talpote but was shot dead by other soldiers.

Police said the assailant was a 16-year-old from nearby Jabel Mukaber, the same neighbourhood that was home to three Palestinians who carried out attacks earlier this week.

Israeli security forces have deployed massively in Jerusalem to try to halt the attacks and, on Wednesday, began setting up checkpoints in parts of east Jerusalem, including Jabel Mukaber.

But that has failed to stop the violence.

The United States, which tried but failed last year to broker peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians, urged leaders on both sides to help rein in the unrest.

"We are very concerned about the outbreak of violence," Obama said in Washington Friday.

"It's important for both (Israeli) Prime Minister (Benjamin) Netanyahu... and (Palestinian) President (Mahmud) Abbas and other people in positions of power, to try to tamp down rhetoric that may feed violence or anger or misunderstanding," he said.

US Secretary of State John Kerry, who could travel to the region soon, has spoken separately to Abbas and Netanyahu to ask them to restore calm.

Abbas has been under pressure over recent comments that some have labelled incitement and has called for peaceful protests without explicitly condemning the violence.

US group scales back plan to monitor Egypt election

Egyptian expats casting votes in polls

CAIRO, Oct 17, (Agencies): Egyptians residing abroad began casting votes Saturday in the country's first parliamentary election since the 2013 military overthrow of Islamist President Mohammed Morsi.

Egypt's state-run news wire MENA said embassies and consulates in 139 countries will be open for two days of voting.

The vote is staggered, with polling in half of Egypt's governorates set to start Sunday. The election will take place in two phases, concluding in early December.

President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi called on Egyptians to vote in a televised speech Saturday.

"Line up in front of polling stations and plant with your votes the hope for a bright tomorrow for our new Egypt," he said.

Voting will go forward in Egypt under heavy security, in light of regular militant

attacks since Morsi's ouster. At least 185,000 military troops will secure the election in the first phase, MENA reported. Interior Ministry spokesman Abu Bakr Abdel-Karim says they will be joined by 180,000 police.

Few candidates have broad recognition or clear platforms, and most have a pro-government bent.

The vote will mark the final step in what has been billed as a transition to democracy. But critics say the next legislature is likely to be a rubber-stamp body that further solidifies the power of el-Sissi, a former general who led Morsi's overthrow.

The vote is also taking place in an atmosphere in which public criticism of the government is strongly discouraged. Virtually the entire media is supportive of el-Sissi and regularly berates critics as traitors or supporters of Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood, which is now officially branded a terrorist group.

Egypt has been without a parliament since it was dissolved by a court ruling in 2012.

The 2011 election, held after the uprising that toppled longtime autocrat Hosni Mubarak, saw candidates from across the political spectrum, from ultra-conservative Islamists to left-wing youths, vying for seats. Egyptians stood in line for hours to cast their votes — many for the first time in their lives — and the Muslim Brotherhood won the largest bloc.

None of the key liberal figures that helped fuel the 2011 uprising, like Nobel Peace laureate Mohamed ElBaradei or former presidential candidate Hamdeen Sabahi, are running in the current elections.

In the face of the government's crackdown and curbed freedoms, lesser known pro-democracy activists who burst onto the political scene in 2011 have either sought exile abroad, withdrawn from public politics or been jailed.

UAE releases Iranian teachers

Iran trying to resolve Rezaian's case

TEHRAN, Oct 17, (AFP): Iran is trying to resolve the case against Iranian-American reporter Jason Rezaian "from a humanitarian point of view", Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Saturday.

The Washington Post reporter, who has been jailed in Iran for more than a year, has stood trial on espionage charges.

He is awaiting his verdict, which officials say has been issued but not communicated two months after his fourth and last court hearing.

"We try to resolve the case from a humanitarian point of view," but "the charges are serious and it's a judiciary process," Zarif told reporters, according to the official news agency IRNA.

Rezaian, 39, was arrested in July 2014 at his home in Tehran where he had been working as a correspondent for the American paper for two years.

He appeared four times since May at closed-doors hearings before the Tehran Revolutionary Court, a special court that

presides over politically charged cases or those related to national security.

Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejeie, the judiciary's spokesman and deputy chief, said last week "the verdict for this case has been issued". "This verdict can be appealed," he said, suggesting Rezaian had been found guilty, but did not detail the judgement.

Washington Post executive editor Martin Baron said the "vague and puzzling" statement from the Iranian judiciary "only adds to the injustice" surrounding Rezaian's case.

Meanwhile, the United Arab Emirates has released nine Iranian teachers it detained for nine days over work permit problems, Iran's official IRNA news agency reported on Saturday.

Iran provides teaching staff for 10 Iranian schools in the UAE which serve an emigre population estimated in the hundreds of thousands, and it summoned the Emirati charge d'affaires earlier this week to protest the teachers' detention.



Hundreds of people offer carnations as they gather to commemorate the victims on the first week anniversary of twin blasts that claimed 102 lives at the site of explosions in Ankara, Turkey on Oct 17. The commemoration started at 10:04 am local, the time the bombs went off last Saturday, and the crowd stood in silence in memory of the deceased victims. (AP)

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RECALL CAMPAIGN

Chrysler 300, Dodge Durango, Dodge Charger and RAM model year 2004-2010 vehicles imported into Kuwait

In coordination with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry – Department of Consumer Protection, and in line with the keenness of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to conduct an ongoing review of all the products imported into Kuwait and provide the customer with the required protection, the Chrysler, Dodge and RAM Authorized Distributor in Kuwait announces a recall campaign for the referenced models.

Recall Description:
The driver airbag inflator housing in the affected vehicles may rupture due to excessive internal pressure, during normal airbag deployment events. This condition is more likely to occur if the vehicle has been exposed to high levels of absolute humidity for extended periods of time.

Process:
The driver airbag inflator needs to be inspected and may need replacement if needed.

Fiat Chrysler Automobiles Middle East and Al Mulla and Behbehani Motor Company W.L.L., in agreement with Ministry of Commerce and Industry – Department of Consumer Protection have taken a decision to launch a Recall campaign to perform inspections.

Contacts:
For more information, please call: 1885500 / Ext. 501 / 502

The Chrysler, Dodge and RAM authorized distributor in Kuwait requests customers who own the referenced models to have their vehicles repaired at the authorized service centers in the country.

For vehicle recall enquiries visit website: <http://recalls.mopar.com/>

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