

Egyptian security forces kill 6 militants in desert raid

Author:

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Sat, 2019-01-12 (All day)

CAIRO: Egypt's interior Ministry says security forces have killed six Islamic militants in a raid on their desert hideout south of the capital Cairo.

It said the militants killed in the early Saturday raid were hiding in an area between the southern provinces of Sohag and Assiut. The militants were killed in a firefight initiated by the militants, it added.

Egypt has been battling Islamic militants for years. An all-out military campaign to quash their insurgency in the north of the Sinai Peninsula began nearly a year ago with the government throwing into battle tens of thousands of troops, jet-fighters, tanks and helicopter gunships.

The campaign brought to a halt high-profile attacks blamed on the militants, like one last year in which they killed more than 300 worshippers in a Sinai mosque.



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Egyptian forces kill 40 suspected militants after tourist bus bombed
Egypt: 27 militants killed in Sinai, border with Libya

Pompeo: US relationship with Saudi Arabia essential for Middle East stability

Sat, 2019-01-12 15:15

LONDON: The United States' relationship with Saudi Arabia is essential to the Middle East's stability and security, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Saturday.

The US secretary of state told Al Arabiya that America wants an Arab coalition and force that is capable of facing the different challenges in the region. He added that the US will not be leaving the Middle East, and that destroying Daesh is a priority.

Pompeo is on a whistlestop regional tour aimed at reassuring US allies after President Donald Trump's shock decision to withdraw all US troops from Syria. He was in Abu Dhabi on Saturday after a visit to Bahrain on Friday.

He told Al Arabiya that the US withdrawal from Syria does not contradict its strategy towards Iran, and nor does it mean a retreat with regards to fighting terrorism.

The Iranian people should know that interfering in the affairs of other states is "unacceptable," and the US wants to hear the voice of the Iranian people, Pompeo said.

The US top diplomat has also visited Cairo, Amman, Baghdad, and the Iraqi Kurdish regional capital of Irbil.

The United States plans to jointly host a global summit focused on the Middle East, particularly Iran, next month in Poland, the US State Department said on Friday. The gathering will take place in Warsaw from Feb. 13 to Feb. 14, it said in a statement.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told Fox News in an interview on Friday that the meeting would "focus on Middle East stability and peace and freedom and security here in this region, and that includes an important element of making sure that Iran is not a destabilizing influence."

Pompeo said that a number of matters would be discussed at the summit, the most important of which would be Iran.







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Pompeo in Bahrain on first leg of tour of Gulf allies
Pompeo praises Egypt 'freedoms' during church and mosque visit

Palestinians mourn woman killed by Israeli fire at protest

Author:

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Sat, 2019-01-12 (All day)

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip: Hundreds of Palestinians have gathered for the funeral of a woman killed by Israeli forces at a protest near the perimeter fence, this year's first fatality from the weekly mass demonstrations.

Amal Al-Taramsi, a 43-year-old activist who had regularly attended the protests, was buried Saturday after being shot the day before.

Of the 186 Palestinians killed since the protests were launched last spring, only three were women. A 21-year-old medic and a 14-year-old girl were killed last year.

Gaza's Hamas rulers have orchestrated the protests, in part to call for the lifting of a crippling decade-long Israeli and Egyptian blockade.

The demonstrations draw Palestinians of all ages, but it is usually young men who approach the fence, often hurling rocks and firebombs at Israeli forces on the other side.



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Gaza's fatal ritual: Endless protests, mounting casualties Hamas and Israel halt fire over Gaza after Egyptian mediation

[Explosion sparks fire at Aden refinery in Yemen](#)

Author:

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1547241140924465800

Fri, 2019-01-11 20:04

ADEN: A fire that ripped through a storage tank at the main oil refinery in Yemen's Aden on Friday evening was probably started deliberately, an official said.

The fire, which also spread to a nearby pipeline, was likely "the result of an explosion (and) probably a deliberate act of sabotage," said the official,

who did not wish to be named.

He did not specify who may have been responsible.

"The fire brigade are working to contain the blaze and stop it spreading to the neighboring storage tanks, which are full of oil and diesel" donated by Saudi Arabia, he added.

Another official said security forces had prevented anyone from leaving the site and opened an investigation into the incident.

Early indications suggested "an explosion and an act of sabotage" were to blame, he said.

Yemen's government took up residence in the southern port city of Aden after Houthi rebels ousted it from the capital Sanaa in 2014.

Aden's refinery was damaged in fighting the following year between government and Houthi forces which put it out of operation for more than a year, causing severe fuel shortages and power cuts.

Yemen produced a relatively small amount of oil before its war.



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Houthi drone control center destroyed in Yemen as US condemns Lahaj attack
UN 'alarmed' over renewed Yemen violence after drone attack

Turkey vows operation against Kurdish militia, when time is right

Author:

Fri, 2019-01-11 23:30

ISTANBUL: Turkey's defense minister on Friday pledged to wage a campaign against a US-backed Syrian Kurdish militia, sharpening focus on a potential conflict the US has sought to prevent.

The comments from Hulusi Akar, on an unannounced visit to inspect troops stationed near the Syrian border directly opposite territory held by the US-backed Kurdish YPG, appeared to be aimed at both Washington and its Kurdish allies.

Turkey and the US, although NATO allies, are deeply divided over the implementation of President Donald Trump's plan to bring home about 2,000 troops stationed in Syria. The plan hinges on Turkish cooperation to secure a swathe of northeast Syria as the US departs.

While the pull-out has been clouded by mixed messages from both Trump and his administration, on Friday the US-led coalition against Daesh began the process of withdrawing, a spokesman said.

Trump's national security adviser, John Bolton, this week tried to make the case for guarantees that Turkey would not harm the YPG after the withdrawal. That earned a stiff rebuke from President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Turkey considers the YPG a terrorist organization and sees Washington's support for it against Daesh as a betrayal.

"When the time and place comes the terrorists here will be buried in the ditches they have dug, as was done in previous operations," Akar said in a speech to military personnel at a brigade command center in the province of Sanliurfa, referring to two other cross-border campaigns that Turkey has carried out in Syria.

Turkey views the YPG as an extension of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which has waged a three-decade insurgency in Turkey's largely Kurdish southeast. The Kurdish groups that control a vast swathe of northern Syria have now turned to Moscow and Damascus in the hope of striking a political deal that will stave off Turkey and shield their autonomy in the north.

Ankara has repeatedly expressed frustration over a deal with the US for the withdrawal of the YPG from the city of Manbij, just west of the Euphrates River.

"Before us we have Manbij on one side and the east of the Euphrates on the

other,” Akar said, underscoring the scale of a potential operation. “Important preparations and planning have been made in connection with this. Our preparations are continuing intensively.”

Turkey’s planned military operation against a Kurdish militia in Syria does not depend on an American withdrawal from the region, Ankara said on Thursday.



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Turkey cannot accept Bolton’s comments on Kurdish fighters: Erdogan
Turkey bolsters troops in Kurdish areas of northern Syria: war monitor