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France's Fabius says anti-ISIS coalition must be reinforced

26 MAGGIO 2015 BY ANDREA SPADA



[Iraq](#) and [Syria](#) risk further division if international efforts to tackle [ISIS](#) militants there are not stepped up quickly, [France](#) warned Tuesday.

Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius, speaking ahead of a June 2 meeting in [Paris](#) of nations fighting ISIS, also said Iraq's government had not honored commitments to its partners to represent the interests of all sectors of its society.

He further said Syrian President [Bashar Assad](#) had lost control of his country and that a political solution between elements of his government and the opposition needed to be found quickly to "save Syria."

"In Iraq, like Syria, international mobilization must be strengthened very quickly or else we are heading towards the division of one or the other country, if not both, with new massacres and disastrous consequences," Fabius told lawmakers without elaborating on what reinforcements he wanted.

The Iraqi government is scrambling to reverse its biggest military setback in nearly a year – the fall of Ramadi, capital of Anbar province west of Baghdad. Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi, due in Paris next week, has vowed to recapture it within days.

Ramadi's fall a week ago was followed by the fall of the city of Palmyra in Syria, the two biggest gains by ISIS fighters since a United States-led coalition began targeting them with airstrikes in both Iraq and Syria last year.

“It confirms what we have said all along. There is no military solution without a political solution. In September, we linked the coalition’s support to political commitments by the new Iraqi government, what we call an inclusive policy.

“This contract is what justified our military engagement and I say clearly here that it must be better respected,” Fabius told lawmakers.”

As the jihadis shore up their positions, Abadi, a moderate Shiite leader, faces an important test over whether he can draw **Sunni** Arabs away from ISIS, a challenge he has struggled to meet despite vows of a more inclusive governance.

He must also show the ability to control powerful Shiite militias tainted by earlier abuses that have stoked Sunni anger toward his government.

The meeting in Paris, where more than 20 foreign ministers, including U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry are due to attend, aims to plot strategy including how to reverse recent losses.

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Poland to Take in Syrian Christian Refugees

26 MAGGIO 2015 BY ANDREA SPADA



Poland will take in 60 Syrian refugee families of the Christian faith Warsaw said Tuesday, just days after it opposed European Union plans for binding quotas on asylum seekers for its 28 member states.

“We’ll welcome 60 families for a start,” Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz told reporters in Warsaw.

“Today Christians who are being persecuted in a barbaric fashion in Syria deserve Christian countries like Poland to act fast to help them.”

Estera, a Polish non-governmental organisation, asked the government to allow around 1,500 Syrian Christians to live in Poland.

The NGO said charities, businesses and churches could cover living costs for the refugees.

Like many EU members, Poland opposes the bloc’s plan for binding quotas on asylum seekers, but is open to taking in refugees and migrants on a voluntary basis.



Libya's UN-backed PM says escaped assassination attempt

Abdullah al-Thinni says he has survived an attack by gunmen who opened fire as he was leaving parliament in Tobruk.

27 May 2015 00:06 GMT | [Middle East](#), [Libya](#)

Abdullah al-Thinni, the prime minister of the UN-recognised government in Tobruk, has said he has survived an assassination attempt by gunmen who opened fire as he was leaving a parliamentary session.

The incident highlighted the unravelling of state authority in the North African country in which two governments and parliaments allied to armed factions are fighting for control four years after rebels overthrew Muammar Gaddafi.

Thinni has faced increasing criticism for running an ineffective rump state in the east since losing the capital Tripoli in the west to a rival faction that now controls ministries and key state bodies based there.

The prime minister told pan-Arab news channel al-Arabiya that after he left parliament in the town of Tobruk and drove off, gunmen in several cars followed his entourage and opened fire.

"We were surprised by a lot of bullets... Thank God, we managed to escape," Thinni said, adding that one bodyguard had been wounded.

He did not elaborate but his cabinet said in a statement the gunmen had been "paid criminals" who had previously tried storming parliament.

Parliament speaker Aqila Saleh had asked Thinni to leave the assembly for his safety after protesters opposed to his government gathered outside the naval base where the parliament meets, two politicians told the Reuters news agency.

A burning car could be seen outside the gated venue, politicians said.

The session resumed after the departure of Thinni who works out of Bayda, near Tobruk to the west.

Security vacuum

Thinni's government had originally planned to set up parliament in the main eastern city of Benghazi but relocated to Tobruk near the Egyptian border after Benghazi turned into a battleground between the government and armed groups.

Parliament initially opened in a Tobruk hotel but moved to the naval base after a suicide bomber detonated a car in front of the hotel in December.

The House of Representatives is being challenged by the legally installed government in Tripoli, known as the General National Congress (GNC), that was set up after a rival faction seized the capital in August.

The GNC had been the country's previous assembly whose mandate had ended with the election of the House of Representatives but was reinstated by the new Tripoli rulers as the country split into two administrations.

27/5/2015

Armed groups have exploited a security vacuum as the two governments fight each other on several fronts without either side gaining the upper hand.

Source: Agencies

Long-delayed tribes conference under way in Cairo

By Eva Dadrian.



Egyptian foreign minister Sameh Shoukry opens the conference (Photo:social media)

Cairo, 26 May 2015:

The much-delayed Cairo conference of Libyan tribes has got off to a shaky start with both Zintanis and the Tuaregs boycotting the meeting. The Zintanis are insisting that gathering should be happening in Libya. Nevertheless, at Egypt's invitation, some 300 tribal delegates from all over Libya listened as Egyptian foreign minister Sameh Shoukry opened the "Building Libya Together" conference.

Shoukry assured the tribal elders that Egypt will not "retreat from helping and supporting the Libyan people ... We believe there is no other way but to restore social peace and cohesion between the people of Libya"

He said that he had flown back to Cairo only a few hours earlier from Algeria where he had had "vital" talks with his Algerian counterpart Ramtane Lamamra and Algerian Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal over the continuing Libya crisis.

According to tribal leader Adel Al-Faidy, head of the conference's preparatory committee, its main objective was "to promote a dialogue between the various tribes" and work to restore stability in Libya. He also thanked Egypt for its role in bringing together "under one roof" the Libyan tribes, but adamantly declared "we reject any form of interference".

One tribal representative, Masoud Omar, who took the floor to enthusiastic cheers from the audience, addressed Egypt directly asking "the brotherly neighbour" to see that the arms embargo on forces allied with Libya's internationally recognised government is lifted.

The United Nations was biased in its dealing with the Libyan crisis.

Loud applause and chants of "Long Live Libya" resonated throughout the conference hall when Omar criticised the United Nations for its refusal to "lift the arms embargo imposed by the Security Council since the 2011 Libyan uprising".

He went on to argue that the United Nations fights terrorism in other countries but "bans weapons from the Libyan army which is battling the same terrorism and the Islamic State group in Libya". Omar asked also Egypt to support the Libyan army with weapons.

On Monday, the Libyan army chief of staff Major General Abdul Razzaq Al-Nazhuri had himself been in Cairo to meet his opposite numbers from other Arab League countries. The main item on the agenda was a draft protocol for a Joint Arab Force, the formation of which was agreed at the Arab League summit in

March.

Nazhoury had told the meeting that the only way stability and security could be restored in Libya was by killing the terrorists. He said that Islamist militias were threatening regional and international security. While some tribal representatives today were not happy with Nazhoury's use of language, one said that they have to stop the macabre "football game played by the armed militias with the heads of their opponents".

The conference is due to end on Thursday. It is not the first time that Egypt has sought to work with Libyan tribal leaders. [Last October Shoukry invited](#) eastern tribal leaders to Cairo to explore their role in ending the conflict. He was also seeking to stop the mass-kidnapping and general harassment of Egyptian truckers travelling through the east of Libya.

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Several Kenyan police officers killed in Shabaab's ambush

26 MAGGIO 2015 BY ANDREA SPADA



Several Kenyan police officers were killed in an attack Monday night by suspected Shabaab militants in the northeastern Garissa county, where 148 students were massacred last month, local media reported.

A police spokesman, George Kimoti, confirmed there was an attack in the Garissa region but declined to give more details.

“Please give us time to consolidate all the information,” he said.

The Daily Nation newspaper of Kenya reported that at least 20 police officers were feared dead, the victims of an ambush Monday night by al-Shabab militants in Yumbis village.

The police officers – who were on their way to rescue another team of officers wounded in an attack earlier on Monday – were moving in a convoy of four vehicles, according to the newspaper. The vehicles reportedly were burned.

The Islamic extremist group al-Shabab has carried out several attacks in Kenya in retaliation for Kenya's military involvement in Somalia, where Kenyan troops are part of an African Union force bolstering the Western-backed central government.

Despite major setbacks in 2014, al-Shabab continues to wage a deadly insurgency against Somalia's government and remains a threat in the East African region.

The group claimed responsibility for a deadly assault last month on a college in Garissa town.