

# Europe Urged to Do More on Refugee Issue

MUNICH - World leaders at the 51st Munich Security Conference are calling on Europe to do more to tackle the refugee issue as a result of increasing conflicts in the world.

The conference from Friday to Sunday was attended by about 20 heads of state and government, 60 ministers of foreign affairs and defense, 30 CEOs of major global companies as well as parliamentary delegations.

In a panel discussion that extended into midnight on Friday, Antonio Guterres, high commissioner of Refugees of the United Nations, urged European countries to show more political will and share responsibility to address the refugee issue.

With increasing conflicts



comes the rising number of refugees, Guterres said, adding that old conflicts have not died and fresh conflicts are sprouting, leaving more people displaced.

Guterres said around 14,000 people were displaced by conflicts every day in the world. In 2013, the number surged to 32,000.

Guterres considered the

capacity of the world to prevent conflicts and solve them in a timely way as "considerably limited", arguing that "crisis can emerge anywhere and anytime with

dramatic humanitarian consequences".

At a panel discussion featuring "Refugee Catastrophe", Guterres dismissed the idea that refugees are flooding to Europe, calling the idea "a fantasy."

While some of the refugees are coming to Europe, "the overwhelming majority" are in the developing world, accounting for 86 percent of the refugees, said Guterres, adding that it's essential for Europe to show a stronger will and approach.

Guterres suggested that European countries should not only take in more refugees but also do "much more" to support the countries hosting a large number of refugees.

He also contended that the European countries

should have a more positive attitude in allowing refugees to legally come to Europe and making more flexible visa policies.

Paolo Gentiloni, minister of Foreign Affairs and Economic Cooperation of Italy, proposed that Italy should allow significantly more migrants and asylum seekers in 2014 compared with previous years.

Besides, he suggested that people should deal with the refugee issue in three ways: to fill the vacuum of some countries, crack down on human-trafficking organizations and carry out economic cooperation with conflict-ridden countries.

Gerd Mueller, minister of Economic Cooperation and Development of ...*(More on P4)...(22)*

## Neighbor News

### Iran, Russia Stress Political Solution to Regional Crises

TEHRAN - Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov in a meeting in Munich on Saturday underlined the need for resolving regional crises through political means.

During the meeting in the German city today, Zarif and Lavrov stressed that talks can help the affected countries reach a political solution to the ongoing crises.

The two sides, meantime, voiced their satisfaction over the current status of Iran-Russia relations, and called for the further broadening of mutual cooperation.

Zarif left Tehran for Munich on Friday to attend an important security meeting in the German city. "I will hold detailed and inclusive bilateral negotiations with all my counterparts attending the Munich Security meeting," Zarif told reporters on Friday before his departure to Germany. Munich is host-

ing a high-level security meeting on February 6-8. A large number of leading decision-makers and prominent senior analysts from different countries are scheduled to participate at the two-day event in Munich to discuss various political and security issues, notably terrorism, the Ukrainian conflict and the Mideast crisis hot-spots. Some 20 heads of states and governments as well as 60 foreign and defense ministers are taking part in the security meeting in the Southern German city, widely regarded as the top annual gathering of political movers and shakers on global strategic issues.

Last week, Iranian Supreme Leader's top aide Ali Akbar Velayati underlined close cooperation between Tehran and Moscow on regional issues, and said the Syrian people and government resisted against the terrorists with the help of the two countries. (FNA)

### Pakistan Begins Legal Process for Military Trial of Terrorism-Related Cases

ISLAMABAD - Pakistani military is set to formally begin hearing of terrorism-related cases as the government has sent 12 cases for trial in courts to be headed by army officers.

The government had decided to set up military-led special courts after the Taliban's brutal attack on an army-run school in Peshawar in December last year that had killed 140 children and 10 of their teachers. The parliament had introduced an amendment in the constitution to set up the courts for the speedy trial as officials

insisted people involved in terrorism escape punishment in the regular judicial system or their trial is delayed.

"To begin with 12 cases assigned to military courts. Legal process kicks off," the army spokesman, Maj. Gen. Asim Bajwa said on Saturday. The courts will be established for two years in four provinces, according to the new legislation. Officials say that the provincial governments have prepared lists of the cases to be referred to the military courts in the coming weeks. (Xinhua)

### CA amidst A Global Economic Mega-Shift: Russia-China

DUSHANBE - World Bank Regional Director for Central Asia, Mr. Saroj Kumar Jha, visited Tajikistan on February 3-5 to discuss the World Bank's current and planned projects aimed at supporting higher living standards for the country's people.

"Due to changing external environment, Tajikistan's economic growth is slowing and vulnerability to shocks is increasing," the Bank's press service quoted Mr. Jha as saying. "With our counterparts in the government we discussed how the World Bank Group can support Tajikistan in protecting the poorest households, while improving macroeconomic management,

creating better conditions for business and strengthening public and financial sectors." Real GDP growth in Tajikistan had moderated to 6.7 percent in 2014 and a deep recession in Russia will significantly undermine growth and poverty-reduction prospects in Tajikistan in 2015. According to the World Bank's latest Global Economic Prospects report, sharp or sustained declines in commodity prices or remittance inflows from Russia — the major source of remittances to the region — represent major risks for the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Tajikistan is particularly vulnerable to these shocks. (TICA)

### Chinese Official Calls for Cultural, Ethical Progress

BEIJING - Senior Chinese official Liu Yunshan on Saturday called for efforts to bolster core socialist values and promote cultural and ethical progress while seeking economic growth.

Liu, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, stressed the need to strengthen the education of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the idea of the Chinese dream among the public.

People's confidence in the country's independ-

ent "path, theory and system" should be further boosted, Liu said at a conference held by the Central Spiritual Civilization Development Steering Commission. More efforts are needed to encourage the public to adapt to the "new normal" of economic development, he added. The "new normal" of economic development features slower speed but higher quality, with more emphasis on innovation. Liu noted that core socialist values should be deeply rooted among the people. (Xinhua)

## Europe and U.S. Clash over How to Confront Putin on Ukraine

MUNICH - Germany's Angela Merkel warned on Saturday that sending arms to help Ukraine fight pro-Russian separatists would not solve the crisis there, drawing a sharp rebuke from a leading U.S. senator who accused Berlin of turning its back on an ally in distress.

The heated exchange at a security conference in Munich pointed to the fragility of the transatlantic consensus on how to confront Russian President Vladimir Putin over a deepening conflict in eastern Ukraine that has killed more than 5,000. Russia's annexation of the Crimean peninsula

in March last year and evidence that it is supporting separatist forces in the east of the country, which the Kremlin denies, have driven Moscow's relations with the West to a post-Cold War low.

A recent rebel offensive has triggered a flurry of shuttle diplomacy, with Merkel and French President Francois Hollande jetting to Moscow on Friday to try to convince Putin to do a peace deal. But European officials say the Russian leader may have little incentive to negotiate now, preferring to sit back and watch the separatists make territorial gains in Ukraine



that have made a mockery of a prior ceasefire agreement clinched last September in Minsk, Belarus.

Ukraine's military said on Saturday that pro-Russian separatists had stepped up shelling of government forces and appeared to be amassing forces for new offensives

on the key railway town of Debaltsevo and the coastal city of Mariupol. The German leader conceded in Munich, after returning home from Moscow in the dead of night, that it was uncertain whether a Franco-German peace plan presented to Kiev and Moscow this ...*(More on P4)...(23)*

## Russia Expresses Optimism about Solution to Ukraine Issue

MUNICH - Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Saturday that Russia saw grounds for optimism on the resolution of Ukraine crisis, but stressing that military intervention should not be an option.

In a speech at the ongoing 51st Munich Security Conference, Lavrov said negotiations over Ukraine crisis would continue in the future and that his country believes "there are good grounds for optimism on issue recommendations for conflict resolution".

"Russia would be com-

mitted to peace. We would like to see a withdrawal of heavy weapons. We would like to see a direct dialogue between Kiev and Donetsk," Lavrov said, adding that the "the Ukraine crisis cannot be resolved by force".

The official also criticized the west for trying to "blame Russia for anything" and disregarding his country's interests. "The world is at a turning point," said Lavrov. "If opportunistic decisions were taken, we may lose control of global governance." (Xinhua)

## US Invites Xi for State Visit: Rice

WASHINGTON - The United States government has invited Chinese President Xi Jinping for a state visit this year, US National Security Advisor Susan Rice said on Friday. Talks about such a visit by Xi to the US this year has been circulated for some time as Xi is also expected to visit the United Nations in New York City in September for the 70th anniversary of the founding of the international body.

If Xi makes his trip to the US in September, it will be his third visit to the US in the last three and half years. He last visited the US in June 2013 with the historical shirt-sleeves summit with Obama at the Sunnylands retreats in Rancho Mirage, California. He also visited the US in February, 2012 as

China's vice-president, meeting both Obama and Vice-President Joe Biden and toured Muscatine, Iowa, a small town where Xi first visited in 1985 as a county chief of North China's Hebei province. "With China, we're building a constructive relationship that expands practical cooperation across a wide spectrum of issues from global health to non-proliferation, even as we confront real differences over human rights, cyber-enabled economic espionage, and the use of coercion to advance territorial claims," Rice said on Friday in a talk on US national security strategy held at the Brookings Institution, where she was a senior fellow before joining the Obama administration. (Agencies)

## Syria Death Toll Now Exceeds 210,000: Rights Group

AMMAN - The death toll after nearly four years of civil war in Syria has risen to 210,060, nearly half of them civilians, but the real figure is probably much higher, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said on Saturday. The Observatory, which is based in Britain and has a network of activists across Syria, said that 10,664 children and 6,783 women were among the dead.

Reuters tried to contact Syrian authorities for comment, but they were not immediately available. Peaceful protests against four decades of rule by President Bashar



al-Assad's family in March 2011 degenerated into an armed insurgency following a fierce security crackdown. The rights group said it had counted 35,827 Syrian rebels and 45,385 Syrian army soldiers killed. The Observatory's toll could not be independently verified by Reuters.

Among the Observatory's documented deaths were 24,989 foreign jihadist fighters, including radical Sunni rebel groups such as Al Qaeda offshoot Nusra Front and Islamic State. But the total death toll was likely to be much higher, perhaps by more

than 85,000, said the group's chief, Rami Abdul Rahman. Groups on both sides try to hide their casualties, he said, making the fighter death toll very difficult to gauge.

Over 3,000 fighters belonging to Shi'ite militias and groups in Iraq and Iran, including 640 from Lebanon's Hezbollah, died fighting alongside the Syrian army, the group said. Abdul Rahman said all the cases included in its 210,000 death count were those it could verify with either name and identification documents, or pictures or videos. (Reuters)

## Turkey's Powerful Spy Chief Resigns to Become MP



ISTANBUL - The powerful head of Turkey's intelligence agency, one of the closest allies of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has resigned to stand for election as a lawmaker, the official Anatolia news agency said Saturday. The resignation of Hakan Fidan, who has headed the National Intelligence Agency (MIT) since 2010, could herald a major reshuffle of the Turkish government after June 7 legislative elections. Turkey's press have in the last days speculated

feverishly that Fidan's standing as an MP would set him up to become the new foreign minister, a move that would give a higher profile to Turkish diplomacy.

His resignation has been accepted by Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu and will take effect on Tuesday, Anatolia added. The move came after Fidan, believed to be in his late 40s, held several hours of closed door meetings with Erdogan and Davutoglu in Anka-

ra last week. Davutoglu had in a television interview last week lavished praise on Fidan, describing him as "brave and bold and not going back once a step is taken."

Seen only occasionally in public and rarely making public comments, Fidan has emerged as one of the most powerful men in Turkey under Erdogan. As head of the MIT, he has led negotiations with Kurdish militants for an end to a decades-long insurgency and has been a key player in Turkey's policy on the Syria crisis. He was also instrumental in controversial talks that secured the release in September of almost 50 Turkish diplomats, staff and their families who were kidnapped by Islamic State (IS) jihadists at the Turkish consulate in Mosul in Iraq. (AFP)

## Palestinians Appoint Committee to Oversee ICC Cases

RAMALLAH - Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas on Saturday ordered the formation of a committee to oversee cases to lodge with the International Criminal Court, in a move likely to further anger Israel.

The Palestinians formally joined the ICC last month, in a move that will enable them to submit war crimes and crimes against humanity complaints against Israel. The new committee will be headed by chief negotiator Saeb Erakat and include various figures from the Palestinian political scene, universities and human rights organizations, said the official Wafa news agency. The committee "will identify and prepare the documents and records that the state of Palestine will present to the ICC,"

the agency said, citing Abbas.

On January 16, ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda opened a preliminary investigation into possible war crimes committed against Palestinians, including during last year's Gaza war. About 2,200 Palestinians and 73 Israelis were killed during the 50-day conflict in July and August.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reacted angrily to the prosecutor's decision, calling it "scandalous" and "absurd" since "the Palestinian Authority cooperates with Hamas, a terror group that commits war crimes, in contrast to Israel that fights terror while maintaining international law, and has an independent justice system." (AFP)

## At Least 34 Killed in Three Bombings in Baghdad

BAGHDAD - At least 34 people were killed in three bombings around Baghdad on Saturday, police said, hours before the government was due to lift a long-standing night-time curfew on the capital.

At least 50 people were wounded in the blasts, the officials said. In the first attack, a suicide bomber detonated his explosive belt inside a restaurant in the Shi'ite neighborhood of New Baghdad, leaving 22 dead, police told Reuters. In the second attack, two bombs ripped through the bustling Sharqa market district, killing 10 people. In a third attack, a bomb killed two and wounded another seven in the Shi'ite section of Abu Sheir in Baghdad's Dura neighborhood, police said. (Reuters)