

## UK Official Vows to Prevent Return of Britons Who Backed ISIS

LONDON - Britain's home secretary issued an explicit warning Friday, saying he would move to block the return of a pregnant British teenager who left the country to join ISIS.

Sajid Javid said he "will not hesitate" to bar the entry of those Britons who traveled to the Middle East to join the Islamic State, saying those people were "full of hate for our country".

The warning is aimed at 19-year-old Shamima Begum, a nine-month pregnant woman who now seeks to return home to Britain and have a jihadist's baby after she infamously fled to the Middle East when she was 15 years old.

"My message is clear - if you have supported terrorist organizations abroad I will not hesitate to prevent your return," Javid told The London Times.



He added that if Begum does return to the country, she will be prosecuted. "If you do manage to return you should be ready to be questioned, investigated and potentially prosecuted," he said.

The teen's family appealed for mercy from the government, saying she was underage when she left for Syria in 2015 - at the peak of the IS recruitment campaign.

She's currently at a Syrian refugee camp together with other family members and jihadist fighters. (Fox News)

### French Schools to Change 'Mother & Father' to 'Parent 1 And 2' Under New Law

PARIS - French schools are set to replace the words 'mother' and 'father' with 'Parent 1' and 'Parent 2' following an amendment to a law which passed through French Parliament this week.

The new naming convention is ostensibly aimed at ending discrimination against same sex parents but critics argue that it "dehumanises" parenthood and may lead to rows over who gets classified as 'Parent 1'.

The amendment, passed Tuesday as part of a

wider plan to build a so-called "school of trust," will also enforce mandatory school attendance for all three-year-olds.

"This amendment aims to root in law children's family diversity in administrative forms submitted in school," said Valérie Petit, MP for the majority REM party of President Emmanuel Macron.

"We have families who find themselves faced with tick boxes stuck in rather old-fashioned social and family models. (RT)

### Israeli Leader Netanyahu, after Meeting with Pence, forced to Spend Extra Night in Poland after Plane Breaks Down

WARSAW - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had to spend Thursday night in Warsaw, Poland, after problems with his plane.

The El Al plane on which the prime minister and his entire entourage were set to travel suffered a breakdown just before takeoff Thursday following a two-day visit to a high-profile security conference initiated by the U.S. that included a meeting with Vice President Mike Pence.

The Israeli delegation was on-board during

the breakdown. A tractor pulling the plane out on the runway apparently tugged it too strongly, leading to the breakdown.

Netanyahu and his wife were promptly taken off the plane Thursday and escorted to a hotel, where they spent the night.

Following the mishap, another plane was dispatched from Israel in a bid to return the Israeli delegation Friday, just before the beginning of the Jewish Sabbath.

The Israeli delegation



had to use the Israeli government's plane because the government doesn't have an official plane for the prime minister. The government has long sought to purchase a plane for official travel such as the journey to Poland. (Fox News)

### Facebook Tracks Ex-Employees It Considers 'Threats' - Report



UNITED STATES - Facebook is tracking users and ex-employees it considers to represent "threats" to its staff via a

"BOLO" list. The practice has been called "very Big Brother-esque" - even for the social media giant.

Facebook "mines" its

network for threatening comments, according to CNBC, which spoke to more than 12 former employees about how the company deals with perceived threats. Then, it uses location data from apps installed on the phones of those users whose threats it finds credible in order to track them.

Any user who publicly threatens Facebook - by showing up repeatedly on company property, penning long email threats, or even posting "improper" comments in

response to public missives from CEO Mark Zuckerberg or COO Sheryl Sandberg - can end up on Facebook's "BOLO" ("be on the lookout") list, where hundreds languish in secrecy.

What constitutes a threat? "F\*ck you, Mark," "F\*ck Facebook," or "I'm gonna go kick your a\*s" are sufficient, according to one former executive protection team employee, though another said decisions were made on a case-by-case basis and there were no hard-and-fast guidelines. (RT)

### Thieves Steal 30,000 Liters of Pure Iceberg Water Intended for Vodka Production

OTTAWA - Canadian authorities are after the criminals responsible for the brazen theft of 30,000 liters of valuable iceberg water that was intended for vodka production, though the thieves may have contaminated the water - rendering it unusable.

The chilling heist of the iceberg water - esteemed for its purity and its use in expensive spirits - occurred last week in the coastal Canadian town of Port Union, police said Wednesday. The water is valued between CAD

\$9,000 and \$12,000. "[The iceberg water] was harvested sometime last year, and it's held in storage containers and it's generally used here, in the Port Union facility, to bottle vodka," constable Andy Renwick told CBC News.

"As far as we know, so far, we're looking at either a tanker truck or a tractor-trailer," he added. The stolen water could have produced around 150,000 bottles of vodka, the broadcaster reported, citing the CEO of Iceberg Vodka. (Fox News)

### Hackers Flock to Hunt for Cracks in Swiss E-Voting System

GENEVA - Swiss authorities are trumpeting the fact that more than 2,000 would-be hackers from around the world have taken up an invitation to try to find holes in Switzerland's groundbreaking online voting system - and potentially earn tens of thousands of francs (dollars) if they succeed.

The Federal Chancellery and Swiss regions, known as cantons, expressed satisfaction at the high response barely a week after launching a registration for IT experts to help crack a planned update to Switzerland's 15-year-old e-voting system. (AP)

### Sweden FM Says She's Upset by Ambassador to China Case

COPENHAGEN, Denmark - Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom says she is "very upset" over meetings arranged by the country's ambassador to China between the daughter of a detained Swedish publisher and two businessmen who allegedly threatened the woman.

Ambassador Anna Lindstedt has been recalled to Sweden and is being investigated. Wallstrom said on Swedish public radio Friday that her ministry didn't have advance knowledge of the meetings in Stockholm arranged by Lindstedt. She declined to elaborate, citing the probe.

The daughter, Angela Gui, published an account Wednesday detailing a "strange" meeting with businessmen arranged by the ambassador. She said they threatened her after offering to help secure her father's release from prison in China.

Gui Minhai, a naturalized Swedish citizen, co-owned a Hong Kong store which sold gossip books about Chinese leaders. (AP)

### BBC Producer Says Hospital Scenes after 2018 Douma 'Chemical Attack' Were Staged

DOUMA - A BBC producer believes that scenes from a hospital in Syria's Douma, which ignited a media frenzy in 2018 after showing children allegedly suffering from chemicals, were staged. But he says Assad did attack the town.



Emotive scenes of Syrian civilians, among them crying, choking, half-naked children, dominated the airwaves in April last year after rebel-affiliated mouthpieces reported yet another "chemical attack by the Assad regime" in the town of Douma. Disturbing reports, including some from the controversial White Helmets, claimed scores of people had been killed and injured. Mainstream media

quickly picked up the horrific (but unverified) videos from a Douma hospital, where victims were treated after this "poison attack." That hospital scene was enough to assemble a UN emergency session and prompt the US-led "coalition of the willing" to rain down dozens of missiles on Damascus

and other locations. But Riam Dalati, a reputable BBC producer who has long reported from the Middle East, took the liberty of trying to sift through the fog of the Syrian war. He believes Assad forces did attack the town, but that the much-publicized hospital scenes were staged. (RT)

### Proposed 'Sanctions from Hell' Against Russia May Curb Trump, But Won't Help US Rule the World

MOSCOW - Even as the 'Russiagate' probe crumbled in the US Senate, five senators resurrected a 'sanctions bill from hell' against Russia. What are the prospects of it passing, and does it even need to in order to achieve its objective?

The "Defending American Security from Kremlin Aggression (DASKA)"

Act, also known as Senate Resolution 482, was announced on Wednesday by the leading Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations committee, Bob Menendez (D-New Jersey). It is a reshuffle of the August 2018 bill (S. 3336) proposed by Menendez and Lindsey Graham (R-South Carolina), called the "sanctions bill from hell" at the time. (RT)

### North Korea Officials En-Route to Vietnam Ahead of Trump-Kim Summit

BEIJING - Twelve North Korean officials - including Kim Jong Un's de-facto chief of staff - were en-route to Vietnam Friday ahead of a second scheduled summit between Kim and US President Donald Trump, South Korea's Yonhap news agency said.

The North Koreans had arrived in Beijing and were expected to board a plane bound for the Vietnamese capital Hanoi, Yonhap said, with the high-stakes meeting now less than two weeks away.

"A group of 12 North Koreans, including Kim Chang Son, were on the boarding list," Yonhap said, citing a source in the capital.

Kim Chang Son was part of the team overseeing protocol in the run up to the first Trump-Kim summit and Yonhap said the delegation was expected to have discussions with US officials on the logistical preparations for the Hanoi meeting.

The identities of the 11 other officials were not reported.

Pyeongyang has yet to provide any official confirmation of the Feb 27-28 summit, which will be the second time the two leaders come together following their June 12 Singapore meeting.

That produced a vaguely-worded document in which Kim pledged to work towards denuclearisation - with no hard timeline agreed.

In preparation for Hanoi, US envoy for North Korea Stephen Biegun was last week in Pyongyang for three days of talks with officials. (AFP)

## Neighbor News

### US, Foreign Powers Support Terror Groups, Rouhani Says in Meeting with Erdogan

TEHRAN - Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has lashed out at Western states, especially the US, for throwing their support behind terror groups.

"Unfortunately, terror groups in the region have been supported by foreign powers, especially the United States, for years," Rouhani said in a meeting with his Turkish counterpart, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in Russia's resort city of Sochi on Thursday.

"Fighting terrorism requires collective cooperation," added Rouhani, describing the scourge to be among the worst predicaments facing the region.

The Sochi summit, host-

ed by Russian President Vladimir Putin, is aimed at solidifying the three countries' cooperation towards returning peace and stability to Syria.

Over the past years, Iran and Russia have been respectively lending military advisory support and aerial backup for the Syrian military in its battle against militants and Takfiri terrorists. The foreign-backed groups started a campaign of bloodshed and destruction against the Arab country in 2011.

In late 2016, Syrian forces liberated the north-western strategic city of Aleppo - militants' biggest stronghold back then. (Press TV)

### Turkmenistan Inks Several Deals with Germany in Agriculture Sector

ASHGABAT - A Turkmen-German business forum was held in Berlin, Trend reports with reference to the Turkmen Foreign Ministry Feb. 14.

On the sidelines of the forum, a memorandum was signed between the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Protection of Turkmenistan and the German Umax Trade GmbH, as well as a number of agreements between the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan (UIET) and German companies.

It was earlier reported that the memorandums of mutual cooperation in

the supply of agricultural equipment, the rational use of land and water resources, the training of specialists in the water sector and in other areas are planned to be signed on the sidelines of the event.

The purchase of agricultural equipment and the exchange of best practices between specialists of the Turkmen and German corresponding structures are designed to promote the further development of the domestic agro-industrial complex.

Cotton and wheat are strategic agricultural crops. (Trend)

### Pakistan, China All Weather Partners: Shibli

ISLAMABAD - The Leader of the House in the Senate, Syed Shibli Faraz, said on Thursday that Pakistan and China were all weather strategic cooperative partners and both had a shared vision for regional growth and prosperity.

He said this while talking to the Vice Chairman of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) here at Parliament House. Gao Yunlong, currently visiting Pakistan, along with his delegation. Shibli said that Pakistan will continue to adhere to One China Policy and support China on all core issues.

He said that Prime Minister Imran Khan also appreciates China's contribution towards regional development and his visit to China last year further

reaffirmed our traditional friendship. He expressed his satisfaction that inter-parliamentary linkages have increased and there is need to bring the people of two sides more close to push forward development agenda.

Shibli emphasised the need to enhance and strengthen institutional linkages between the two parliaments and the friendship groups can play active role in cementing ties. On bilateral friendship, Senator Shibli said that Pakistan's political parties speak with one voice for deepening ties with China.

He said that Pakistan attaches great importance to China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and is committed to its early completion. (Agencies)

### Tajikistan Claims Opposition Leader 'Voluntarily' Returned from Self-Imposed Exile

DUSHANBE - Tajikistan's Interior Ministry says prominent opposition figure Sharodiddin Gadoev has returned to the Central Asian country from abroad and "is sorry for his deeds," while a colleague claims that he was abducted in Russia.

The ministry said in a brief statement that the 33-year-old leader of the opposition Group 24 movement, who has been living in self-imposed exile in the Netherlands for the last several years, arrived in Dushanbe via Moscow on February 15.

"May the misdeeds I have committed be evaluated in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Tajikistan," the ministry quoted Gadoev as saying. According to the minist-

try, Gadoev also said other Tajiks wanted in Tajikistan should return home. Gadoev was wanted in Tajikistan on suspicion of smuggling and forgery. Gadoev's mother told RFE/RL that she was unaware of her son's return to Tajikistan.

One of Gadoev's colleagues, opposition activist Alim Sherzamonov, who lives in a European Union country, wrote on Facebook that Gadoev had traveled to Russia for personal reason and was abducted there and taken to Tajikistan.

In his last post on Facebook, on February 2, Gadoev criticized government plans for a new highway connecting Dushanbe with the city of Bokhtar. (Trend)