

US Consular Staffer in Turkey Remains Jailed as Spy Trial Resumes

ISTANBUL - A US consular staffer was ordered to remain in custody by a Turkish court on Wednesday after the latest hearing in his trial on espionage charges -- part of a growing rift between Washington and Ankara. Metin Topuz, a Turkish citizen and liaison for the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), tearfully denied the charges against him, saying: "I didn't commit any crime," according to an AFP reporter in the court.

Topuz was arrested in 2017 and accused of contacts with police and a prosecutor suspected of ties to US-based Muslim preacher Fethullah Gulen, who Ankara says ordered an attempted coup in 2016. "All my contacts with those in high-ranking positions of the state at the time were entirely part of my work as a translator and assistant liaison officer at the DEA. I am innocent," he said, tearfully. (AFP)

(1) Joint Statement...

Afghan self-reliance.

The United States, in coordination with the Government of Afghanistan, provides civilian assistance across a range of sectors including health, education, economic growth, energy, infrastructure, humanitarian assistance, and cultural heritage preservation. The U.S. investment in Afghanistan builds on the efforts of the international community to support Afghan prosperity. The United States and Afghanistan look forward to continuing our close partnership and working together to promote the journey to Afghan self-reliance. (PR)

(2) Afghanistan, EU...

on Human Rights, Good Governance and Migration. The Committee reviewed the domestic situation in Afghanistan and in the EU, as well as regional and international developments, the statement said.

The EU and Afghanistan discussed in particular development cooperation, trade, investment, good governance, human rights, humanitarian issues, and migration, the statement noted.

The two sides also discussed electoral processes and the upcoming presidential elections, which, they agreed, are essential to strengthen Afghanistan's democracy and stability, the statement underscored.

The Joint Committee acknowledged the current peace momentum for Afghanistan, stressing the strong will of the Afghan people for a peace settlement that not only ends the fighting but also preserves the political, economic and social achievements of the last 18 years, in particular regarding the rights of women, children and minorities.

The Committee also discussed concrete steps to enhance EU-Afghanistan long-term cooperation in line with the EU Strategy on connecting Europe and Asia. (ATN)

(3) HPC Continues...

this team," said Ahmadullah Alizai, former governor of Kabul.

Critics said the Afghan government itself is a hurdle on the way of peace. "The incumbent government has changed to the main obstacle for peace," said presidential candidate Mohammad Haneef Atmar, who addressed a gathering in Kabul on Tuesday.

"The current government is a hurdle on the way of peace in Afghanistan," said Ahmad Wali Massoud, another presidential candidate, who addressed the same gathering.

Sources close to the Taliban have accused the Afghan politicians of committing inattention when it comes to face-to-face talks with the Taliban.

"The Taliban has persistently said that they have not any problem with the politicians and the Afghan nation. Unfortunately, our politicians are not serious about this," said Mawlawi Abdul Shakur Mutmaen, an analyst and a former Taliban member.

Meanwhile, the US and NATO Forces Commander in Afghanistan Gen. Scott Miller in a meeting with Herat officials on Tuesday said they remain committed to peace as well as to supporting the Afghan forces in their fight against militants.

"I am committed to peace but at the same time I know there is a fight and we remain committed to supporting you in that fight," Miller said. (Tolo

news)

(4) Police Accused of...

of Interior Affairs, said they have arrested a couple in connection to the case.

"The anti-crime department of the Interior Ministry has arrested two main suspects who had kidnapped Arijit Singh from PD13. The killers are a wife and husband that one of them was arrested from PD13 and another was arrested from Baghlan province," Nusrat Rahimi, spokesman of interior ministry said. (Tolo news)

(5) India, Iran Discuss...

last year of stopping Iranian oil imports completely. India relies heavily on foreign oil imports to meet its energy demands. (Agencies)

(6) IEC Announces Final...

- Ajmal Rahmani
- Abdul Qayum Khairkhwah
- Khan Agha Rezaee
- Mullah Mohammad Khan Ahmadi

- Fida Mohammad Ulfat Saleh
- Ahmad Jawed Jaihoon
- Mir Amanullah Guzar
- Amirgul Shaheen
- Ghulam Husain Naseri
- Ramazan Bashardost
- Sayed Mohammad Mohammadi
- Allah Gul Mujahid
- Khan Mohammad Wardak
- Qazi Mir Afghan Safi
- Najibullah Nasir
- Habiburrahman Sayyaf
- Anwar Khan Oryakhail
- Abdul Razaq Istalifi
- Tawfiq Wahdat
- Zergai Habibi
- Mohammad Naeem Wardak
- Hafizullah Jalili
- Irfanullah Irfan
- Obaidullah Kalimzai Wardak

Female candidates who have succeeded to win a seat in the parliament are:

- Fatima Nazari
- Gen. Nazifa Zaki
- Shinkai Karokhail
- Mursal Nabizada
- Fawzia Nasiryar Guldaraee
- Robina Jalali
- Maryam Sama
- Zuhra Nawrozi
- Parwin Durani

(Tolo news)

(7) Clashes in...

hard-line Islamist groups.

Nasrat Rahimi, the spokesman for the interior ministry, said four prisoners were killed and 13 prisoners and 20 policemen were injured during the search operation to seize drugs and other illegal substances from the prisoners.

"Police faced resistance from drug traffickers. To disperse and control the angry prisoners, the policemen started shooting in the air but the prisoners engaged with the police and tried to get their weapons," said Rahimi.

Last year, hundreds of inmates at the Pul-e-Charkhi went on a hunger strike to demand better conditions, but it remains overcrowded and lacking in basic infrastructure. (Reuters)

(8) Local Poultry...

chicken imports from Pakistan, the market remained full of that meat.

"The government should strive to stop the smuggling. If it cannot do so, imports from Pakistan be allowed to let the poor eat healthy meat."

Rahmanullah said the serious issues they were facing included high

LONDON - A popular British talk show known for pitting guests against each other was cancelled on Wednesday after the reported suicide of a man one week after appearing on the programme.

Broadcaster ITV pulled "The Jeremy Kyle Show" following the death of 63-year-old Steve Dymond, which sparked widespread criticism including from Prime Minister Theresa May.

"Given the gravity of recent events we have decided to end production of The Jeremy Kyle Show," ITV chief executive Carolyn McCall said.

"The Jeremy Kyle Show has had a loyal audience and has been made by a dedicated production team for 14 years, but now is the right time for the show to end.

"Everyone at ITV's thoughts and sympathies are with the family and friends of Steve Dymond."

Dymond failed a lie-detector test taken on the show to convince his fiancée he had not cheated on her, leading to the couple splitting up, The Sun newspaper reported.

May's spokesman had previously described the case as "deeply concerning".

The programme was ITV's most popular daytime show, attracting around one million viewers per episode. (AFP)

prices of seeds and low quality of chicken vaccine. He asked the government to support them.

Agriculture Director Mohammad Salem Saeed acknowledged the smuggling of Pakistani chicken meat into Afghanistan, including the northern zone.

He said the meat packed in cartons was smuggled and its consumption was injurious to health. Efforts are being made to stop the smuggling with the support of the security forces.

He said the vaccine and medicine they distributed were of high quality, producing the desired results. (Pajhwok)

(9) Xi Says 'No Clash...

battle for global influence, with diplomatic and economic tensions ranging from US military aid to self-ruled Taiwan to criticism of Beijing's Belt and Road global infrastructure programme. (AFP)

(10) Iranian Presidential...

message to the Trump administration, noting that the Iranian military is "fully ready" for any conflict in the region.

"While we have renounced any escalation in the region, I would assure you that Iranian armed forces are fully ready for any eventuality in the region, so they should not try to test the determination of Iran to confront any escalation in the region," he said.

Iran's Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei however later appeared to downplay any prospect of war between the two countries. Iran's state TV quoted Khamenei on Tuesday as calling negotiations with the U.S. "poison" and saying: "This is not a military confrontation, because no war is going to happen."

Khamenei, who has final say on all state matters, said: "Neither we, nor they are seeking war, they know that it is not to their benefit."

Mike Pompeo, the U.S. Secretary of State, also sought to downplay any notion of conflict.

"We fundamentally do not seek a war with Iran, we're looking for the regime to simply stop conducting assassination campaigns throughout Europe," he said Tuesday in the seaside resort of Sochi, Russia.

His comment follows assertions by Trump administration officials that they have detected signs that Iranian or Iranian-backed proxies were preparing for possible attacks against American interests in the Mideast. The administration cited the threats as the reason for expediting the deployment of an aircraft carrier strike group and other military resources to the region. (Fox News)

(11) Japan Approves...

200 patients a year will be eligible to use the drug, although eligible patients seeking national health insurance coverage must be aged 25 or under and seen no effective results from current standard treatments.

The ministry said the new therapy will accrue some 7.2 billion yen (65.78 million U.S. dollars) in revenue per year, under its system of covering between 70 and 90 percent of national health insurance policyholders' medical expenses, depending on their financial circumstances. (Xinhua)

(12) 'Israel Is Not Safe...

has claimed responsibility yet. The hack comes amid a violent flare up of tensions between Israel and Palestinians which began earlier this

month. At least 25 Palestinians and four Israelis were killed in this latest spate of violence.

The Israeli Defense Forces have reportedly deployed a large number of the country's Iron Dome missile Defence batteries anticipating further violence ahead of the anniversary of the US embassy moving to Jerusalem as well as the Palestinians' Nakba Day, which was marred by violence in 2018.

Israel's hosting of the song contest has proven controversial, sparking demonstrations in several countries and numerous calls to boycott on social media. Pro-Palestinian demonstrators also gathered outside the Eurovision venue calling for an end to Israeli control of the West Bank and Gaza strip. (RT)

(13) US Orders All...

News after visiting Baghdad. Washington had earlier deployed the aircraft carrier USS 'Abraham Lincoln' to the Persian Gulf. White House National Security Advisor John Bolton said it was meant to convey a message to Iran that the US is prepared for any attacks on its interests.

Baghdad, meanwhile, continues to be plagued by terrorist attacks. On Thursday, a bomb went off at a marketplace, killing eight people. Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIS) claimed the responsibility for the blast. (RT)

(14) In India Election...

allowing users to reach thousands of people at once.

Divya Spandana, the social media chief of the Congress, and the BJP's IT head, Amit Malviya, did not respond requests for comment.

Rohitash Repswal, who owns a digital marketing business in a cramped, residential neighborhood of New Delhi, said he ran a 1,000 rupee (\$14) piece of software round-the-clock in recent months to send up to 100,000 WhatsApp messages a day for two BJP members.

"Whatever WhatsApp does, there's a workaround," Repswal said during an interview at his small, two-bedroom house.

Reuters found WhatsApp was misused in at least three ways in India for political campaigning: free clone apps available online were used by some BJP and Congress workers to manually forward messages on a mass basis; software tools which allow users to automate delivery of WhatsApp messages; and some firms offering political workers the chance to go onto a website and send bulk WhatsApp messages from anonymous numbers. (Reuters)

(15) U.S. Says China...

In an earlier speech, Richardson said that U.S. naval operations had been consistent over decades and had not risen recently.

"I've done the analysis and I can state with confidence that our level of operations has been consistent over the decades," Richardson said, adding that there had been "no spikes recently".

Beijing denounced what the United States said was an "innocent passage" near the Gaven and Johnson Reefs in the Spratly Islands last week, saying it infringed upon Chinese sovereignty, and "damaged the peace, security and good order of the relevant seas".

The U.S. freedom of navigation operations are aimed at challenging what it sees as Chinese activity limiting freedom of movement in the

strategic waters. In particular, the United States has criticized China's construction of islands on tiny reefs and shoals and its installation of military facilities on them, including air strips and docks. (Reuters)

(16) UN Leader Travels...

"Here in the Pacific, sea-level rise in some countries is four times greater than the global average and is an existential threat to some island states."

Guterres said island nations should speak out.

"As we look ahead, your voices will remain crucial in global negotiations," he said. "Your experiences underscore the urgency of the threat, and the Pacific has a unique moral authority to speak out. It is time for the world to listen."

Guterres made the comments at a meeting with officials from the Pacific Islands Forum in Suva, Fiji's capital.

He also plans to visit the island nations of Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

His trip comes ahead of the Climate Action Summit that he plans to convene in September in New York. (AP)

(17) \$10M XPRIZE...

tablets and having thousands of children in 141 remote villages in Tanzania test it, judges narrowed the competition for the XPRIZE For Global Learning to five final teams from New York City; Pittsburgh; Berkeley; London; and Bangalore, India.

The winner, to be announced Wednesday, will take home both the money and a mandate to develop plans for putting that cash to work getting tablets into the hands of children in impoverished places all over the world. And by Thursday the winner must upload to the internet the code they created for the technology so anyone can have free access to it.

All five finalists developed functional software that will go on the web, said Emily Musil Church, XPRIZE's executive director of prize operations. It was an accomplishment, she acknowledged, that stunned both her and other XPRIZE leaders who fretted for a time that no one would be able to pull it off.

"From the beginning we weren't sure any would work at all," she said, adding with a chuckle: "All our experts said, 'Are you sure about this?'"

While it was a tough decision to pick a winner from that field, she said, some technology did rise above the others.

Not that any XPRIZE competition is easy. (AP)

(18) Indonesia Tightens...

attack police during the planned demonstrations.

Prabowo has refused to concede and his team has made accusations of "massive cheating and irregularities" in the voting and vote-counting process.

"We have won the mandate of the people," the former special forces commander told hundreds of supporters at a campaign event on Tuesday.

"If we give up, that means we are giving in to unfairness, and that means we are betraying our own country and our people."

His team has threatened to resort to "people power"-style street protests, although it has pledged they will be peaceful. (Reuters)