

USD 01
GBP 01
EUR 01
JPY 100

PKR 1000
AFN 1078
AUD 01
NZD 01

PKR 1000
AFN 500
EUR 01
USD 1.00

PKR 1000
AFN 94.85
EUR 01
USD 1.00

PKR 1000
AFN 0.37
EUR 01
USD 1.00

PKR 1000
AFN 11.22
EUR 01
USD 1.00

Turkey used child soldiers in Syria and Libya: US

The United States on Thursday added Turkey to its country list of child soldiers in the use of child soldiers over the past year, playing a NATO ally for the first time in such a list, as it moves that likely to further complicate the already fraught relations between Ankara and Washington.

The US State Department determined in its 2021 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) that Turkey was providing "tangible support" to the Taliban militant network in Syria, in a factor of Syria's opposition and a group that Washington said recruited and used child soldiers.

In a briefing call with reporters on a senior State Department official also made a reference to the use of child soldiers in Libya, saying Washington was hoping to work with Ankara on the same to address it.

"With respect to Turkey in particular, this is the first time a NATO member has been listed in the child soldier provision section," the State Department official said. "As a respected regional leader and member of NATO, Turkey has the opportunity to address this issue, the recruitment and use of child soldiers in Syria and Libya," he said.

Turkey has carried out three cross-border operations in Syria against ISIS, as well as the Kurdish-led militia and has frequently used forces of armed Syrian



fighters on top of an iron fence. Some of those groups have been accused by human rights groups and the United Nations of indiscriminately attacking civilians and carrying out kidnappings and killings. The United Nations has also accused Turkey of using Syrian mercenaries to fight in Syria and Libya.

Turkey has also been involved in the Libyan conflict. Ankara's support has helped the Tripoli-based government to retake a 14-month swath from eastern Libya backed by Egypt and

France. Governments placed on this list are subject to restrictions, according to the State Department report, on certain security assistance and commercial financing of military equipment, about a prohibition on arms.

It was not immediately clear whether any restrictions would automatically apply to Turkey. It was also not immediately clear if the listing would have an impact on ongoing negotiations with the United States to re-open the Ankara airport after Washington

Thousands of asylum seekers in UK wait years for verdicts: Report

Tens of thousands of people waiting in the UK for a decision on their asylum claim have been waiting more than a year for a decision, according to a report published on Friday. Some 12,600 people had been waiting for 12 months or longer for a decision in 2020, a jump of more than 800 percent.

Overall, 46,185 people were awaiting an initial decision on their status at the end of March this year, the highest number in more than a decade and up from 7,375 in March 2011.

Ernest Solomons, head of the Refugee Council, said, "Leaving vulnerable men, women and children waiting for years on the fringes of their lives is what both like a never-ending state of limbo and

is an increasingly inefficient and unfair way to operate a refugee protection system." The mounting backlog was driven by a failure to process cases in pace with the number of applications being made, as well as pandemic-related delays, he said.

It noted the health crisis had led to changes in Home Office procedures which harmed efficiency, such as the suspension of going interviews in 2020, the closure of the number of child

down waiting lengthy periods for decisions was even more pronounced. Some 6,687 had been waiting more than a year for a decision on their case in 2020, compared with 561 a decade earlier, a jump of more than 1,000 percent.

Among those waiting, more than 250 people - including 55 children - had been left in limbo for five or more years.

The Refugee Council, whose report was based on a Freedom of Information request, said the average waiting time for an initial decision was likely to be between one and three years.

The charity's report cited one asylum seeker who is still awaiting a decision on his case after arriving in the UK with his wife and two children in 2016, having escaped kidnapping and persecution in his home country.

"Sometimes the Home Office takes so long to say that we have

KS Relief, WFP sign \$60 million deal to provide food security for Yemen

Saudi Arabia's King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSRC) signed a \$60 million deal with the World Food Programme (WFP) to address the food needs of nearly 50 million people in Yemen, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported on Thursday.

The deal was signed by WFP Executive Director David Beasley and KSRC's Executive Director Dr. Abdullah al-Habshi on the sidelines of the UN development ministers meeting in Britain, southern Italy.

The Kingdom's donation is part of an agreement to provide relief to the people affected by the conflict, including the impact of COVID-19 on millions of Yemenis, the WFP said in a statement.

The program, which will last for 18 months, aims to secure 18.4 million meals for more than 4.6 million people suffering from acute malnutrition, according to SPA. "We are currently addressing an alarming deterioration of the food security situation in Yemen that goes beyond any levels seen before," said Beasley.

"We are grateful to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for this urgently needed contribution to WFP's life-saving operations, with which we have long-standing cooperation in the area of humanitarian response to the crisis," Beasley said.

For his part, al-Habshi said the donation shows that the humanitarian needs of the Yemeni people are a priority for the Kingdom. "This program will contribute to providing food security to the people in different areas of the country," he said. "Significant progress has been made in the area of food security, but we still need to continue our efforts to ensure that all Yemenis have access to food and nutrition." SPA noted the cooperative agreement is ongoing.

Iraq struggles with widespread power outages amid scorching temperatures

A widespread power outage hit Iraq on Friday as temperatures reached scorching levels, affecting vast areas in the capital and other major cities.

Baghdad's power grid was generating just over 4,000 MW, according to the Ministry of Electricity, which is far below the 20,000 MW the grid generates on average. The outages have impacted Baghdad and southern provinces in particular.

Local channels reported that the outage was due to the cutting of a major power line - known as a 400 KV - between Baghdad and the southern province of Babil. A ministry official said the reason was not immediately known, but that it could have been because the line was overloaded, or as a result of sabotage. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to brief the media.

Total shutdowns can occur when Iraq's electricity network is working at maximum capacity. Delays in the transmission net-

work and distribution capacity also contribute to outages. High temperatures can also impact the distribution lines.

The outage struck southern Baghdad, where some residents typically enjoy 24 hours of electricity. Water pumps, which rely on electricity, stopped working in many areas, impeding access to water.

"If this isn't resolved quickly, it will have catastrophic effects on everything we're working," a senior Baghdad-based contractor said. Power outages routinely fuel protests in Iraq. Power government service delivery and respect for government demonstrations across Iraq in 2019.

It has recently cut critical electricity supply to Iraq, which has caused a major crisis in the south, which has caused a major crisis in the south, which has caused a major crisis in the south.

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Judge to start questioning top politicians over deadly Beirut port blast

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Israel strikes Gaza in retaliation after incendiary balloon launch

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