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'We won't let Syria safe zone become swamp'

President Erdogan says aim of safe zone inside Syria border should be to keep terror groups away from Turkey's border

By Diyar Guldogan

ANKARA - Ankara will never allow a safe zone in Syria to be transformed into "another swamp" against Turkey, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Monday. "We can never allow an implementation of a safe zone [to be established in northern Syria] to be transformed into another swamp against our country," Erdogan said at a meeting of the Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (TOBB) in the capital Ankara. Erdogan said Ankara was not against the formation of 30-kilometer (20-mile) safe zone in northern Syria near Turkey's border, adding the aim of a safe zone should be to keep terrorist organizations away from Turkey's border. The president said Turkey has "no eye" on Syria's territorial

integrity, adding he will also discuss the issue with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Moscow in the upcoming days. About a possible operation in the region east of the Euphrates River, Erdogan said almost all preparations have been completed. A mission east of the Euphrates River, which Turkey's leadership has been suggesting for months, would follow two successful cross-border Turkish operations into Syria since 2016 -- Operations Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch -- meant to eradicate the presence of YPG/PKK and Daesh terrorists near Turkey's borders. In its more than 30-year terror campaign against Turkey, the PKK -- listed as a terrorist organization by Turkey, the U.S. and the EU -- has been... **MORE DETAILS**



Historic Bangsamoro vote held in Philippines

COTABATO CITY - A referendum set to shape the future of Muslims in the southern Philippines has started on Monday. The Bangsamoro Muslims, long deprived of freedom under the U.S. and the modern Philippine state, reached the final phase in an autonomy agreement signed with the government in Manila in July 2018. On Monday, nearly 3 million people are voting on the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) under tight security measures in Cotabato City, the regional center of Muslim

Mindanao. The voting started at 7.00 a.m. (2300GMT) and will conclude at 3.00 p.m. (0700GMT). The referendum is set to grant the Bangsamoro or Moro -- a collective term for Filipino Muslims living on an island in the southern Philippines -- long-awaited comprehensive autonomy. Al Hajj Murad Ebrahim, leader of Moro Islamic Liberation Front, cast his vote at the Simuay Junction Central Elementary School and told reporters he was hopeful that the law will be... **MORE DETAILS**

MILF seeks more Turkish support



By Ahmet Furkan Mercan

SULTAN KUDARAT - Muslims in Mindanao, the Philippines will need Turkey's help and support as a majority-Muslim region gains autonomy following a referendum, the chairman of the Moro Islamic Liberation

Front (MILF) said on Sunday. "We need Turkey's help and support in this new process. We urge Turkey to help us in education and development and to boost its support to us," Al Hajj Murad Ebrahim told Anadolu Agency. The referendum, starting tomorrow, is set to... **MORE DETAILS**

Turkey ready to take over security in Manbij

ANKARA - Turkey is ready to take over the security in Syria's Manbij without delay, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said during a phone conversation with his U.S. counterpart late Sunday.

A statement from the Turkish presidency said Erdogan and U.S. President Donald Trump agreed to take joint measures to clear Daesh's remnants in Syria and prevent the group's resurgence.

Erdogan said that Turkey will not allow PKK and its Syrian affiliate PYD/YPG to destabilize northeastern Syria. The two leaders also discussed the bilateral relations... **MORE DETAILS**

Explosives seized in southeast anti-PKK op

ANKARA - Turkish security forces have seized 150 kilograms of explosives during an operation against the terrorist PKK group in Turkey's southeastern Mardin province, the local governorship said Monday. The operation was conducted on Saturday in the

Harmankaya neighborhood of Omerli district, Mardin governor's office said in a statement. An improvised explosive device was also seized during the operation. In its more than 30-year terror campaign against Turkey, the PKK... **MORE DETAILS**

4 regime troops killed in Israeli airstrike



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