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Authorities grill members of terrorist cell busted in Kuwait

Investigators probing suspects' sponsors, meetings, activities

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Following the arrest of eight members of a terrorist cell linked to Egypt's outlawed Muslim Brotherhood in Kuwait on Friday, security sources yesterday said state security investigations with them focused on three basic elements - the visas on which they entered Kuwait and their relationship with the sponsors who issued them; the meetings they had in Kuwait with Kuwaitis or others and whether they were held with good or bad intentions; in addition to the nature of work and activities they practiced in Kuwait. According to sources, some of the suspects - all Egyptians - worked for a charity organization in Kuwait.

The sources added that investigators want to know whether the cell had planned any operations outside Kuwait while they were here. The sources said after confiscating the group's laptops, mobile phones and documents, state security detectives are currently examining and analyzing them to prepare a complete case file. The sources said the terrorist group had been tracked down after state security received tips from local and foreign sources, including suspects arrested

in Egypt, concerning the cell members and the danger they pose due to their military training.

A statement by the interior ministry on Friday carried by the state-run news agency KUNA said the militants were allegedly members of a "terrorist cell", including some who have been "convicted of terrorism" and sentenced to jail in Egypt. "Those arrested carry Egyptian nationalities and belong to the Muslim Brotherhood organization," the ministry said.

The suspects, it said, are wanted by Egypt where some of them have been sentenced to up to 15 years in jail. During interrogations, the suspects admitted to carrying out terrorist operations in Egypt. Investigations are ongoing to determine their accomplices, the statement said, warning that it will crack down ruthlessly against saboteurs.

Egyptian authorities have led a crackdown on Muslim Brotherhood members after the military overthrew Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in 2013. Later that year Egypt outlawed the Muslim Brotherhood and declared it a "terrorist organization". Egypt and its allies, including Gulf powerhouses Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, consider the Muslim Brotherhood a "terrorist" organization.



KUWAIT: A screen grab taken from a video released by the interior ministry late Friday shows the eight suspects who were arrested on terrorism charges. — Mol

News in brief

Three killed in Mahboula blaze

KUWAIT: Three people were killed in a fire that broke out in the early hours of yesterday in a six-storey building in Mahboula. Security sources said firemen rushed to the scene and found the fire was on the first floor. The building was evacuated and 12 residents were rescued and rushed to Adan Hospital, said the sources, adding three of the injured died on the way, while two others are in critical condition. The sources said firemen faced difficulties in fighting the fire due to a number of violations in the building and that legal actions will be taken against the owner. An investigation is in progress to determine the cause of the blaze. — Hanan Al-Saadoun

Sheikh killed while cleaning gun

KUWAIT: A ruling family member in his thirties was killed by a bullet while he was cleaning his gun in his house, said security sources. Forensic and criminal investigators were dispatched to the scene for further investigations. — Meshaal Al-Enezi

Bedoon arrested for incitement

KUWAIT: The interior ministry's PR and security media department said a bedoon was arrested for posting a video on social media networks in which he made incendiary statements including threats to the regime and called for rioting, which are deemed as severe violations of Kuwaiti laws. The suspect was referred to the public prosecution pending further action. — Hanan Al-Saadoun



Kuwait backs Xinjiang policy

GENEVA: Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Russia and 35 other states have written to the United Nations supporting China's policies in its western region of Xinjiang, in contrast to strong Western criticism. China has been accused of detaining a million Muslims and persecuting ethnic Uighurs in Xinjiang, and 22 ambassadors signed a letter to the UN Human Rights Council last week criticizing its policies. But the letter supporting China commended what it called China's remarkable achievements in the field of human rights. The letter was also signed by ambassadors from many African countries, North Korea, Venezuela, Cuba, Belarus, Myanmar, the Philippines, Syria, Pakistan, Oman, Qatar, the UAE and Bahrain. — Reuters

Customs foils bid to smuggle 10m drug pills

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti customs officers seized on Friday 10 million Tramadol pills, enlisted among narcotics that affect human mental condition. Jamal Al-Jalawi, Director of the Kuwait Customs Directorate General, said in a statement personnel of the customs warehouses management at Shuwaikh Port seized the banned drugs.

Jalawi said the Tamol-X 225 pills were in a container shipped from an Asian

country, adding that the importer tried to smuggle the shipment illegally into Kuwait, and when he failed, attempted to send the drugs abroad. Musaad Al-Hlailah, inspection supervisor at the port, said the smugglers attempted to bring the cargo in a 40-foot container with a manifest reading electrical and medical appliances.

Hlailah said contents of the container were examined after the importer tried to reshipe them, thus arousing suspicion among officers in charge. Screening devices showed cartons were packed with the prohibited pills. Tramadol is illegal in Kuwait and its medical prescription for some cases of physical or psychological illnesses is subject to regulations and terms. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Customs officers are seen with the 10 million Tramadol pills seized at Shuwaikh Port on Friday. — KUNA

Turkey ignores US warnings on S-400 missiles

ANKARA: Turkey ignored US warnings as it continued yesterday to take delivery of Russia's S-400 missile defense system near Ankara, a defense ministry statement indicated. "Delivery of S-400 Long Range Air and Missile Defense Systems resumed today," the statement said. "The fourth Russian plane carrying S-400 parts landed at Murted Airport outside Ankara," it added.

The US fears that if Ankara integrates the S-400 into its defenses, data about the US-built F-35 fighter jet could leak

back to the Russians, and Washington has threatened to deny Turkey access to the stealth aircraft. The western defense alliance NATO, which counts Turkey as one of its members, is also "concerned about the potential consequences" of the S-400 purchase, an official told AFP.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has refused to back down and said he is confident Turkey will not face US sanctions, after meeting his US counterpart Donald Trump on the margins of the G-20 summit in Japan last month. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists on Friday that "everything is happening in strict accordance with the agreements and signed contracts, all obligations are being carried out".

While the Trump administration stayed quiet, members of Congress

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ANKARA: A Russian military cargo plane carrying the S-400 missile defense system from Russia is seen at Murted military airbase on Friday. — AFP

Hurricane takes aim at Louisiana

MORGAN CITY, Louisiana: Barry strengthened into a category 1 hurricane yesterday as it neared the Louisiana coast, US meteorologists said - prompting millions of residents of the southern US state to hunker down for expected major flooding. At 10:00 am (1500 GMT), the storm was packing sustained winds of 120 km per hour - just above the minimum to qualify as a category 1 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson scale, the National Hurricane Center (NHC) said in its latest storm advisory.

The eye of the storm was located about 50 miles from Morgan City, to the west of the state's biggest city New Orleans, and moving at a slow pace of six miles an hour - meaning that landfall could still be hours away. But the outside

edge of the storm was already punishing the US Gulf Coast with heavy rains. Authorities ramped up evacuations, airlines canceled flights and flood gates were slammed shut.

In Morgan City, the streets were deserted. The Atchafalaya River had flooded its banks, and trees were already blown over in residential areas. "It's painstakingly slow," government meteorologist Ben Schott told CNN, noting that residents should not be lulled into complacency about facing the storm. "If you don't have to go anywhere, stay home. Monitor what's going on. Do not put yourself at risk."

With Barry dumping rain across several southern states, federal emergency declarations were issued to help free up resources to address the storm. Governor John Bel Edwards said New Orleans was well prepared to withstand the storm, the first hurricane of the Atlantic season, but urged vigilance by residents across the state, tens of thousands of whom had lost power.

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NEW ORLEANS: A cyclist rides along a near deserted street near downtown as most of the city is hunkered down indoors in anticipation of Hurricane Barry yesterday. — AFP