

world

British PM voices regret over 1919 India massacre

London, United Kingdom

British Prime Minister Theresa May yesterday expressed regret for a massacre by British troops in India in 1919 but stopped short of a full apology.

"We deeply regret what happened and the suffering caused," May told the British parliament, as India prepares to mark the 100th anniversary of the killings.

Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the main opposition Labour Party, called for "a full, clear and unequivocal apology".

The April 13, 1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre, in which British troops opened fire on thousands of unarmed protesters, remains an enduring scar from British colonial rule in India.

Colonial-era records show about 400 people died in the northern city of Amritsar when soldiers opened fire on men, women and children in an enclosed area, but Indian

figures put the toll at closer to 1,000.

Former British prime minister David Cameron described it as "deeply shameful" during a visit in 2013 but also stopped short of an apology.

A ceremony was due to take place at the site of the massacre on Saturday.

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MAY TOLD THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT

Erdogan says S-400s delivery could be earlier



Russian President Vladimir Putin (R) and his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan arrive for a meeting on Russia-Turkey Cooperation at the Kremlin in Moscow

Ankara, Turkey

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said the delivery of Turkey's disputed Russian S-400 missile defence systems could be earlier than initially planned, Hurriyet daily reported yesterday.

Ankara's purchase of the S-400s risks US sanctions and has further strained already tense relations with Washington.

US officials are concerned over the incompatibility of the S-400s with NATO military hardware as well as Ankara's increasingly close relationship with Russia.

"The S-400 missile defence system was to be delivered in July, maybe we will bring this forward," Erdogan told Turkish journalists on board his plane after a Russia visit, the newspaper said.

Erdogan was in Moscow on Monday for talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, with the S-400 purchase and joint coordination in Syria on the agenda.

"This step that we have taken for our country's security neither targets a third country

nor does it give our sovereign rights over to a third country," Erdogan said.

In a bid to stop Turkey purchasing the S-400s, the US has offered to sell the US Patriot system but Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said this was not guaranteed.

"If the United States does not want to sell the Patriot, tomorrow we can buy a second S-400, or another defence system," he said during an interview with NTV broadcaster.

He said Turkey did not only need the S-400s but also "other defence systems".

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov later on Wednesday said Russia was "open" to a second purchase.

"Russia has the relevant capabilities, technological skills," he said.

"And of course Russia seeks to expand military and technical cooperation. It's a completely normal process."

Last week, Washington put a freeze on its joint F-35 fighter jet programme with Turkey in protest over the S-400 deal. Turkey planned to buy 100 F-35A fighter jets, with pilots already training in the US.

Battle for Tripoli escalates



Gun-mounted vehicles belonging to fighters loyal to the internationally recognised Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA) are pictured near a military compound in a suburb of the capital Tripoli

AFP | Tripoli, Libya

The battle for Libya's capital intensified as the UN Security Council prepared to meet yesterday to discuss the crisis gripping the North African country, where armed rivals are locked in a deadly power struggle.

The closed-door talks in New York come a day after the United Nations postponed a Libyan national conference aimed at drawing up an election roadmap because of fighting raging on Tripoli's doorstep.

Libya has been riven by divisions since the NATO-backed overthrow of dictator Moamer Kadhafi in 2011, with various armed groups and two parallel governments vying for territory and oil wealth.

Heavy arms fire was heard during much of the night in the Ain Zara district on the southeastern outskirts of Tripoli as strongman Khalifa Haftar's forces pressed an assault aimed at taking the capital from the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA).

"The clashes have intensified. We're afraid to leave the house," a resident said by telephone from the area, where roads were reported to have been blocked, hindering people's efforts to flee.

The violence has already displaced thousands and left several dozen people dead.

The UN warned that nearly half a million children in Tripoli were "at immediate risk".

Haftar's self-styled Libyan National Army (LNA), which controls swathes of the country's east, said it had seized a barracks in the Aziziya area around 50 kilometres (31 miles) south of Tripoli after "ferocious clashes".

It said several fighters loyal to the UN-backed government had been detained and their weap-

ons seized.

The internationally recognised government carried out several air raids against LNA positions south of Tripoli, and also hit supply lines in central Libya, GNA spokesman Colonel Mohamed Gnounou said Tuesday.

Haftar's forces appear to be advancing on two fronts, from the south and southeast of Tripoli, while coastal roads to the east and west of the city are defended by fighters loyal to the GNA.

'Spare civilians'

Haftar has defied international calls, including from the UN Security Council and the United States, to halt the surprise offensive launched on Thursday.

The UN's high commissioner for refugees, Filippo Grandi, called for the warring parties to "spare civilians, including refugees and migrants trapped in the country".

The UN children's agency (UNICEF) urged all parties "to refrain from committing grave violations" against children, including the recruitment of child soldiers.

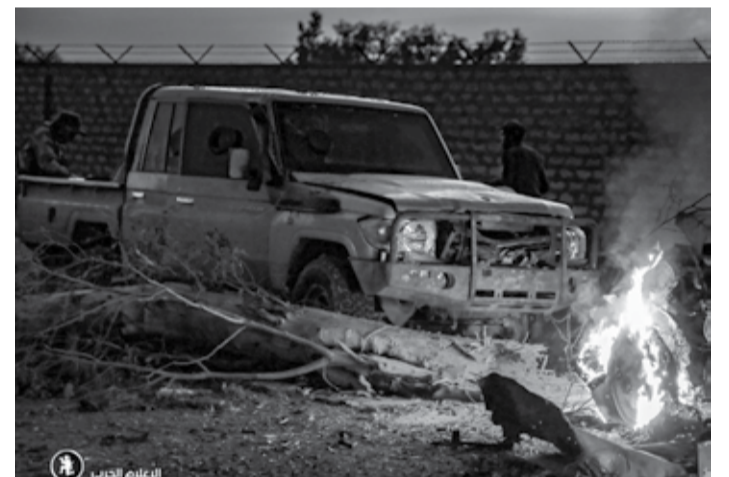
"Nearly half a million children in Tripoli and tens of thousands more in the western areas are at a direct risk due to the intensification of fighting," it said.

The GNA's health ministry on Monday put the death toll in the fighting at 35. Haftar's forces have said 14 of their fighters have died.

The UN said the clashes have displaced some 3,400 people.

Led by Fayeze al-Sarraj, the GNA's authority is not recognised by a parallel administration in the east of the country, which is allied with Haftar.

LNA spokesman Ahmad al-Mesmari accused the unity government of "allying itself with Islamist militias" from the city of Misrata 200 kilometres (120 miles) east of the capital.



A burning vehicle outside the 4th Brigade camp in al-Aziziyah, located some 40 kilometres south of the Libyan capital Tripoli



A tank and members of the LNA outside the 4th Brigade camp in al-Aziziyah



Fighters from a Misrata armed group loyal to the internationally recognised Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA) prepare their ammunition before heading to the frontline