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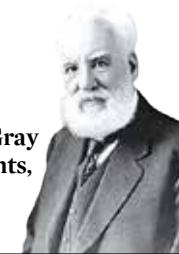
1076

1797

1876

Pope Benedict  
VIII crowns Henry  
II Holy Roman  
EmperorPope Gregory VII  
excommunicates Holy  
Roman Emperor Henry  
IV for the first time

Battle of Cape St. Vincent: British fleet under Admiral Sir John Jervis defeats larger Spanish fleet under Admiral Don José de Córdoba y Ramos near Cape St. Vincent, Portugal. Captain Horatio Nelson distinguishes himself

Alexander Graham Bell and Elisha Gray  
apply separately for telephone patents,  
the Supreme Court eventually rules  
Bell the rightful inventor

# Russia, Ukraine to hold talks in Geneva on February 17-18

US-mediated negotiations resume in Switzerland as the war enters its fifth year

● Russia appoints hawkish negotiator Vladimir Medinsky

● Ukraine seeks robust Western security guarantees

● Zelensky rallies allies at Munich conference

AFP | Kyiv

Russia and Ukraine will hold US-brokered talks on February 17-18 in Geneva, both countries said yesterday, announcing the next leg in fraught negotiations seeking to end the four-year war.

US President Donald Trump is pushing to end the conflict, unleashed when Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, but two previous rounds of US-mediated talks in Abu Dhabi have not yielded any signs of a breakthrough.

Both sides said publicly the discussions were productive, but Moscow and Kyiv remain far apart on the key issue of territory.

"The next round of talks on the Ukrainian settlement will be held in the same trilateral Russia-US-Ukraine format, on February 17-18 in Geneva," Russia's state-run RIA Novosti news agency cited Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying.

Peskov said Moscow's delegation to Geneva will be headed by Vladimir Medinsky, a hawkish ex-culture minister who led previous failed talks in Turkey, in a switch from the senior military officials who led two previous



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky (C) and German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius (L) walking during a visit of the drone manufacturer Quantum Frontline Industries at the 62nd Munich Security Conference (MSC) in Munich

rounds in Abu Dhabi.

Kyiv confirmed the talks were set for the scenic Swiss city.

"The Ukrainian delegation has already begun preparing for this meeting," said its top negotiator Rustem Umerov, head of Ukraine's National Security Council.

He will be joined by Zelensky's chief of staff and former spy master, Kyrylo Budanov, and a host of other officials.

Russia's switch of negotiating teams comes after an assassination attempt on the deputy of its top negotiator in Moscow earlier this month -- an attack it said was orchestrated by Kyiv.

## Territory

Ukrainian President Volody-

**YOU  
KNOW WHAT**  
**Russia swapped its military-led negotiating team for a political one headed by Vladimir Medinsky following a recent assassination attempt on a deputy negotiator in Moscow**

myr Zelensky yesterday arrived in Munich to hold rounds of

meetings with European and US officials, seeking support from allies ahead of the talks. He also toured a Ukrainian-German drone production facility.

Russia has continued to batter Ukrainian cities in recent days, killing six people across the country in overnight strikes that targeted the southern port city of Odesa and energy infrastructure.

Moscow has stuck to its demands in the talks for sweeping territorial and political concessions from Ukraine -- rejected by Kyiv as tantamount to capitulation.

Russia is pushing for Ukraine to pull out of the eastern Donetsk region -- around one-fifth of which Kyiv's forces still control.

# US transfers thousands of IS detainees from Syria to Iraq

AFP | Baghdad

The United States Central Command said yesterday it had completed the transfer of thousands of detained Islamic State group suspects from Syria to Iraq.

They had been held in Syria for years in prisons run by Kurdish-led forces, but the recapture of surrounding territory by Damascus prompted Washington to step in.

CENTCOM said it "completed a transfer mission following a nighttime flight from northeastern Syria to Iraq on Feb 12 to help ensure ISIS detainees remain secure in detention facilities."

"The 23-day transfer mission began on Jan 21 and resulted in US forces successfully transporting more than 5,700 adult male ISIS fighters from detention facilities in Syria to Iraqi custody," it added in a statement.

The US had previously announced it would transfer around 7,000 detainees.

IS swept across Syria and Iraq



US military vehicles move along a road in a convoy transporting Islamic State group detainees being transferred to Iraq from Syria, on the outskirts of Qahtaniyah in Syria's northeastern Hasakah province

in 2014, committing massacres and forcing women and girls into sexual slavery.

Backed by US-led forces, Iraq proclaimed the defeat of IS in the country in 2017, and the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) ultimately beat back the group in Syria two years later.

The SDF went on to jail thou-

sands of suspected jihadists and detain tens of thousands of their relatives in camps.

## 'Job well done'

Last month, Syrian troops drove Kurdish forces from swathes of northern Syria, sparking questions over the fate of the IS prisoners.

Lingering doubts about security pushed Washington to announce it would transfer them to Iraq to prevent "a breakout" that could threaten the region.

"We appreciate Iraq's leadership and recognition that transferring the detainees is essential to regional security," said head of CENTCOM Admiral Brad Cooper.

"Job well done to the entire Joint Force team who executed this exceptionally challenging mission on the ground and in the air with great focus, professionalism, and collaboration with our regional partners," he added.

Most of the detainees are Syrian but there are also hundreds of foreign nationals from Arab countries as well as Europe, Asia and Australia, a senior Iraqi security source told AFP earlier this week.

Many prisons in Iraq are already packed with IS suspects.

The detainees in Syria were transferred to Baghdad's al-Karkh prison, once widely known as Camp Cropper where former Iraqi ruler Saddam Hussein was

held before his execution.

To make space for the newcomers, authorities moved thousands of prisoners from the Karkh prison to other facilities, a lawyer and an inmate told AFP on condition of anonymity.

Earlier this month, Iraq's judiciary said it had begun investigations into detainees transferred from Syria.

Under Iraqi law, terrorism and murder offences are punishable by death, and execution decrees must be signed by the president.

Iraqi courts have handed down hundreds of death sentences and life terms to those convicted of terrorism offences, including foreign fighters.

Iraq has issued calls for countries to repatriate their nationals among the IS detainees, though this appears unlikely.

For years, Syria's Kurdish forces also called on foreign governments to take back their citizens, but this was done on a small scale limited to women and children held in detention camps.



TOP  
4  
TWEETS

01



It was an honor to host my fellow @iascch members at @WFP at this critical moment. As needs rise and resources shrink, our purpose remains crystal clear: we must continue reaching people in greatest need — guided by humanitarian principles. Together we can save more lives.

@WFPChief

02



European Leaders have a clear priority — to strengthen our economic growth. 2026 will be the year of competitiveness. This is the commitment coming out from Alden Biesen.

@eucopresident

03



Thank you Morocco for hosting the sixth global conference on the elimination of child labor this week. UNICEF's message is clear: Children should be in school, not in child labor. #EndChildLabour

@unicefchief

04



\$38B for Ukraine's defense. The UDCG results reflect our clear plan and the concrete solutions we're building with our allies. Thank you to every country for the significant new contributions. Together, we are strengthening our shared security.

@FedorovMykhailo

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