

## Headlines:

- **Austria to Shut 'Political' Mosques**
- **Erdogan Launched War in Qandil**
- **Afghan Ceasefire**
- **Sisi to Crackdown on Media**

## Details:

### **Austria to Shut 'Political' Mosques**

Austria's Chancellor, Sebastian Kurz announced the country said will close down seven mosques and expel imams in a crackdown on political Islam. The announcement came after the ATIB, an Islamic organisation in Austria close to the Turkish government re-enacted the WW1 battle for Gallipoli. The WW1 battle, one of the last victories of the Ottoman Empire, stopped Allied forces reaching its capital, Constantinople. The chancellor's election campaign last year drew heavily on anxiety about immigration and the integration of Muslims. His conservative People's Party (ÖVP) formed a coalition government with the far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ). Kurz wants the EU to break off Turkey's EU membership negotiations - a stance that has angered Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The Austrian government says 60 of the 260 imams in the country are being investigated, of whom 40 belong to ATIB, an Islamic organisation in Austria close to the Turkish government.

### **Erdogan Launched War in Qandil**

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced that Turkish forces began a counterterrorism operation in Iraq's Qandil and Sinjar regions June 11. Drawing parallels to Afrin, Erdogan said that the goal of the operation is to eliminate the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) from Qandil to guarantee the region is no longer a source of terrorism for Turkey. This comes on the back of an agreement with the US after months of tension over north Syria and the US working with the PKK. Only a few months ago Iraq blocked a Turkish military deployment to Sinjar after Erdogan threatened to launch an offensive in the region to drive out the PKK, which Turkey considers a terrorist organization.

### **Afghan Ceasefire**

The Taliban announced a three-day ceasefire for the length of Eid. This came on the back of President Ashraf Ghani of Afghanistan declaring a cease-fire. The cease-fire, which Mr. Ghani said would go into effect for eight days to coincide with one of the holiest periods on the Muslim calendar, comes months after his government presented an extensive peace offer to the Taliban. Interestingly according to the New York Times, word seemed to be trickling down slowly based on interviews with 20 Afghan army and police commanders around the country. Only six were aware of the cease-fire when reached about an hour after the announcement, and they said they had heard it on television. The others said they were unaware. Once again this appears to be another attempt by the US to achieve an occupation and victory after 17 years of failure.

### **Sisi to Crackdown on Media**

Egypt's parliament approved three new media regulations that will require all news websites to apply for permits from the state regulator, including social media accounts with 5,000 followers or more, and provide their budgets and financial reports to Egyptian authorities. The proposed laws will allow Egyptian authorities to swiftly crack down on the media in the country and provide the government justification to shut down or pressure groups or individuals with 5,000 followers or more that do not register. Ever since Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi was re-elected in March, Egypt has seen a resurgence of authoritarianism that has been described as more extensive than what was experienced under Hosni Mubarak.