



News Report 7th - 13th March

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Image: [Trajan117/Wikimedia](#)

Terrorist attacks: Tunisia, Ivory Coast, Turkey

Terrorist attacks occurred in the Middle East and Western Africa this week. One of the attacks took place in [Ben Gardane](#) (Tunisia), on 7th March. Close to the Libyan border and to the tourist destination Djerba, the Tunisian town [was attacked](#) by dozens of terrorists at dawn. The attack – carried out [with assault rifles](#) – led to the death of seven civilians, nine members of security forces and twenty-eight assailants, [according to](#) the government. [According to](#) a witness, the attackers claimed to be members of the Islamic State, and led to the [decision](#) by the government to seal off Djerba, close border passages with Libya and impose a curfew on the town where the attack took place.

Another attack took place on 13th March in [Grand-Bassam](#) (Ivory Coast), this time claimed by AQIM affiliates Sahara Emirate and al-Mourabitoun. The claim [was published](#) by Mauritanian newspaper *al-Akhbar**, and [more extensively](#) by AQIM's agency *Al-Andalus*. The attack led to the death of [at least 16](#), and was carried out [by gunmen](#) who opened fire on three hotels located in the town.

Finally, on 13th March [in the evening](#), a bomb attack took place in [Ankara](#)'s Kizilay district. The attack led to the death of at least thirty-two people, [according to](#) the government, and interested an area [close](#) to many administrative buildings. Turkish President Recep Erdogan – *Hurriyet Daily News* [reported](#) – has responded by blocking the access to social media, while [strikes](#) were carried out against PKK camps in Iraq. Also, Erdogan [renewed](#) his resolve to fight terrorism. [According to](#) Turkish authorities, one of the assailants had recently joined PKK, signing up with

the group in 2012. No official statement has been published yet, so caution is needed. The attack occurs indeed in contrast with the group's general focus on military targets, but in line with a decade's long [trend](#) also includes attacks on civilians and civil officers.

Syria: Negotiations proceed

Despite the continuation of hostilities in Syria, negotiations proceed in Geneva to find a solution to the conflict. Assad's government [agreed](#) on 7th March to take part in talks that will take place on 14th March, and the same can be said for non-jihadist fighters: the Riyadh-based High Negotiations Committee (HNC) agreed to participate, [according to Agence France Presse](#). The negotiation won't be easy, with Assad's negotiations [having claimed](#) the president's role in Syria must be out of the meeting's agenda.

Refugees: a plan for Turkey

While the Syrian conflict goes on, the European Union is negotiating with Turkey a plan [proposed by](#) PM Ahmed Davutoglu on 7th March. The plan [would involve](#) the resettlement into Turkey of one refugee stranded in Greece for each refugee resettled from Turkey to Europe; moreover, Turkey would be accorded €3 billion to be added to the €3 billion promised by the EU in 2015. The Turkish government [also asked](#) for the revision of the visa duty for Turkish citizens and a renewed kicking off of the process of integration of Turkey in the EU. UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi [questioned](#) the plan, stating the necessity for the plan to be in line with guarantees refugees will not be sent back to conflict zones. Similar claims [were made](#) by *Amnesty International* and *Doctors without Borders*.

Islamic State: internal documents obtained

Exclusive documents [were provided](#) by a former IS militant and published by *Sky News* and other media outlets, showing a so far unknown facet of the group's internal structure. Documents include forms handed to wanna-be fighters, where they were asked to state their name (or nom de guerre), their contact numbers, their motivations. These documents' relevance [was questioned](#) though by *The Guardian's* Martin Chuvol, who highlighted how these (and similar) documents miss to show the most important features of the group – namely, leadership and weapons – and can often be counterfeited to grant the messenger a way out of conflict areas. Nevertheless, as Chovul admits, they may provide some interesting information, and were deemed as “probably genuine” by some governments (one of them [being](#) Germany).

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