

**Jordan awaits proof that hostage is alive after swap deadline**

TOKYO (AP) — The fates of a Japanese journalist and Jordanian military pilot were unknown Friday, a day after the latest purported deadline for a possible prisoner swap passed with no further word from the Islamic State group holding them captive. Jordan has said it will only release an al-Qaida

prisoner, Sajida al-Rishawi, from death row if it gets proof the pilot, Lt. Muath al-Kaseasbeh, is alive and so far has received no such evidence from the hostage-takers. At the same time, the government is under domestic pressure to win the release of al-Kaseasbeh, the first foreign pilot to be captured by Islamic State militants since a U.S.-led military coalition began carrying out air strikes against IS-controlled areas of Iraq and Syria in

September. Jordan is part of the coalition. In the pilot's home village of Ay in the southern Karak district, several dozen protesters called for his release and chanted against Jordan's role in the alliance against Islamic State. "The sons of Jordan must not be sacrificed for America," read a banner. Former Jordanian Foreign Minister Marwan Muasher said that the Jordanian government faces only bad options in the hostage crisis. The pilot was

captured in December, after his F-16 fighter plane went down over an IS-controlled area of Syria. **African nations open new front in war on terror** MAIDUGURI, Nigeria (AP) — Schoolgirls torn from their families in a mass kidnapping and forced into sexual slavery. Bombs that ripped through bus stations. The slaughter of hundreds of villagers, many with their throats cut.

Nigeria has suffered through years of violence from the Muslim extremist group known as Boko Haram, and now its neighbors are starting to take on the militants, too. African nations are opening up a new international front in the war on terror, discussing Friday the formation of a five-nation force of 7,500 troops to confront the looming regional threat from Boko Haram. The United States promised more technical support,

training and equipment. On Thursday, neighboring Chad sent a warplane and troops that drove the extremists out of a northeastern Nigeria border town in the first such act by foreign troops on Nigerian soil. "We saw the fighter jet when it started shelling and bombarding the insurgents," said Abari Modu, who watched the attack from a nearby village in Chad, where he had sought refuge. He praised the prowess of the Chadian forces.



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