

# Four killed after rescue helicopter strikes zip line in UAE's Ras Al-Khaimah

Sat, 2018-12-29 20:37

DUBAI: A rescue helicopter crashed in Ras Al-Khaimah in the United Arab Emirates on Saturday evening killing all of the crew, the country's civil aviation authority said.

Local media reported that the helicopter struck a zip line before crashing and bursting into flames. Video circulated on social media showed the helicopter spinning before it crashed into the mountain.

[#UAE's National Research and Rescue Center \(@NCEMAUAE\)](#) is searching for the bodies of 4 people killed in a helicopter crash in [#rasalkhaimah](#) near the world's largest [#zipline](#) in [#jebeljaish](#)<https://t.co/EotGook3u0> [pic.twitter.com/HkrLmswf00](https://t.co/HkrLmswf00)

– Arab News (@arabnews) [December 29, 2018](#)

The dead include three Emiratis and a foreigner.

"An Agusta 139 helicopter in a rescue mission crashed in Jebel Jais area in the Emirate of Ras Al-Khaimah," state news agency WAM quoted the UAE's General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) as saying.

Ras Al-Khaimah's ruler, Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al-Qasimi, ordered an urgent investigation into the helicopter's crash.

He also ordered "a comprehensive investigation of the security and safety requirements in place to determine the cause of this painful incident," WAM reported.



The Agusta 139 helicopter was operated by the UAE's National Search and Rescue Center. (File photo: WAM)

The statement added that the helicopter crashed at about 5:55 p.m. local time (1:55 p.m. GMT).

An official said the helicopter from the National Search and Rescue Center was on a mission to airlift an injured man from Jebel Jais but the helicopter crashed before reaching the man.

Jebel Jais, the highest mountain in the UAE, is home to the world's longest zipline.

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Jebel Jais, the highest mountain in the UAE, is home to the world's longest zipline. (Shutterstock)

The zipline, measuring 2.83 kilometers long, opened in February as part of an effort by the emirate of Ras al-Khaimah to attract more tourists and residents from neighboring emirates like Abu Dhabi and Dubai.







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[Ras Al-Khaimah](#)

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Leicester City helicopter crash caused by mechanical fault, say investigators  
Mexican governor, senator killed in helicopter crash -reports

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## [Russia, Turkey to coordinate on Syria after US pullout](#)

Author:

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Sat, 2018-12-29 15:33

MOSCOW: Russia and Turkey on Saturday agreed to coordinate ground operations in Syria after the shock announcement of a US military withdrawal, Moscow's top diplomat said.

President Donald Trump's move has already hastened a shift in alliances with Syrian troops deployed Friday in support of Kurdish forces around a strategic northern city. The Kurds, under threat from Ankara, had been supported by US forces.

"Of course we paid special attention to new circumstances which appeared in connection with the announced US military pullout," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said after talks with Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu. The Syrian deployment pleased ally Russia but upset Turkey ahead of Saturday's talks in Moscow.

"An understanding was reached of how military representatives of Russia and Turkey will continue to coordinate their steps on the ground under new conditions with a view to finally rooting out terrorist threats in Syria," Lavrov said.

Cavusoglu confirmed the two countries would coordinate Syria operations, adding they also discussed plans to help refugees to return home.

"We will continue active work (and) coordination with our Russian colleagues and colleagues from Iran to speed up the arrival of a political settlement in the Syrian Republic," he said in remarks translated into Russian.

"We have the common desire to cleanse Syrian territory of any terrorist organization, Cavusoglu added.

Lavrov said he was "optimistic" following the talks which included Russian and Turkish defense ministers Sergei Shoigu and Hulusi Akar.

Trump last week said he was pulling all 2,000 troops from Syria, declaring that Washington had achieved its objective as Daesh had been "knocked" out. The extremist movement has lost nearly all its territory, although thousands of its militants are thought to remain in war-battered Syria.

Nearly eight years into Syria's deadly conflict, the US pullout has led to

another key step in President Bashar Assad's Russian-backed drive to reassert control over the country.

The Syrian army announced its return to Manbij, a strategic city close to the Turkish border where Kurdish forces have been deployed since 2016 and where US-led coalition forces are also stationed.

A US withdrawal will leave them exposed to an assault by Turkey, which has thousands of proxy fighters in northern Syria and wants to crush Kurdish forces it considers terrorists.

The Syrian army's arrival creates a regime buffer arching across northern Syria that fully separates the Turkish army and its proxies from the Kurds. Ankara reacted to the deployment by warning "all sides to stay away from provocative actions."

On Friday, Russia said it would host a three-way summit with Turkey and Iran on the Syrian conflict early next year following their last such meeting in September.



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Turkish, Syrian forces edge close to each other in Manbij  
UAE reopens Syrian embassy in Damascus

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# First Gaza rocket in six weeks draws Israeli response

Author:

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Sat, 2018-12-29 08:46

JERUSALEM: An Israeli aircraft hit a Hamas position in the Gaza Strip late on Friday in response to the first fire from the territory since a November flare-up, the military said.

"An army attack helicopter targeted a Hamas military position in the south of the Gaza Strip," an army statement said.

It said it had responded after a "launch toward Israel" that Israeli media said was a rocket.

Gaza's Islamist rulers Hamas said the Israeli aircraft fired two missiles which damaged one of their positions but caused no casualties.

It was the first rocket fire from Gaza since an Egyptian-brokered cease-fire announced on November 13 ended the worst flare-up around the territory since a 2014 war.

In the space of 48 hours, hundreds of rockets and mortar rounds were fired into Israel, killing one person and wounding 27.

The barrage followed a botched Israeli commando raid which killed a Hamas commander and six other militants as well as an Israeli officer.

Seven Gazans were killed and 26 wounded in retaliatory Israeli air strikes before the cease-fire took effect.

Israel and Palestinian militants in Gaza have fought three wars since 2008, and mass protests along the border since March 30 have triggered deadly clashes with the Israel army that have raised fears of a fourth.

During a protest on Friday, Israeli fire killed Karam Fayyad, 26, on the border east of the city of Khan Yunis, the Gaza health ministry said.

At least 240 Palestinians have been killed since the demonstrations began, most of them by Israeli fire during border clashes but also by air and tank strikes.



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Israeli gunfire kills a Gazan during border protests  
Palestinian security forces block press conference by parliament speaker

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## [Houthis begin withdrawal from Yemen's Hodeidah port: UN](#)

Sat, 2018-12-29 11:34

DUBAI: The Houthi militia have begun to withdraw from the port of Hodeidah, the country's key aid lifeline, under an agreement reached in Sweden earlier this month, a UN official said Saturday.

The official, who requested anonymity, said that the Houthis began to pull back from the Red Sea port at midnight (2100 GMT Friday).

However, a Yemeni government source denied reports that the Houthi militia had withdrawn from Hodeidah.

The source confirmed that the statements of the Houthi militia on Saturday on their redeployment in the port of Hodeidah were attempts that they were claiming to abide by the Stockholm agreement on Hodeidah.

"We can not accept these violations, which will lead to a failure in the agreement," the source said.

The Iranian-aligned Houthis have agreed with the government to implement a ceasefire in Hodeidah province and withdraw their respective forces.

Retired Dutch general Patrick Cammaert, the head of a UN advance team in charge of monitoring the ceasefire, arrived in Hodeidah this week.

Under the deal, international monitors are to be deployed in Hodeidah and a Redeployment Coordination Committee including both sides, chaired by Cammaert, will oversee implementation. The committee started its meetings this week.

A recent report said Houthi militia fired on bulldozers of the Yemeni army during the opening of the Kilo 16 road linking Sanaa, Hodeidah and Taiz, despite both sides agreeing to open all closed humanitarian corridors from key port to the Yemeni capital.

The Arab coalition fighting to restore the legitimate Yemeni government said on Saturday that the Iran-backed Houthi militia is blocking access to a relief convoy, carrying 32 tons of flour, from Hodeidah port heading to a UN organization in the rebel-held capital Sanaa.

Spokesperson Col. Turki Al-Maliki said that the coalition's joint forces issued the necessary permits for the relief convoy and secure its passage through the areas controlled by the legitimate government in Hodeidah after completing all the coordination with the Yemeni National Army.

However, he said the "Houthi terrorist group refused to allow the relief convoy to exit from the port of Hodeidah and secure its safety from the port of Hodeidah to Sanaa, which represents a deliberate obstruction to relief and humanitarian work."

The coalition's joint forces command confirmed the continued issuance of permits to all relief organizations and their movement to alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people as well as supporting all the political efforts of the UN special envoy and the Sweden agreement.

Al-Maliki stressed that the actions of the Houthi militia constitute a flagrant violation of international and humanitarian law, relief efforts and what was agreed upon during UN sponsored peace negotiations in Stockholm earlier this month. The next UN-backed Redeployment Coordination Committee meeting is scheduled for Jan. 1 in Hodeidah.

The coalition also said on Saturday that the Houthi militia committed 14 violations in the past 24 hours, bringing the total number of breaches to 204 since the start of the ceasefire.

A truce in the rebel-held city of Hodeidah and its surroundings went into effect on Dec. 18 and is part of a peace push seen as the best chance yet of ending four years of devastating conflict.

Retired Dutch general Patrick Cammaert is heading the joint committee, which includes both government officials and Houthi rebels, and chaired its first

face-to-face meetings on Wednesday.

## Houthi Mines

Meanwhile, Yemen's national army removed hundreds of mines planted by the Houthi militia on routes leading to Hodeidah, the official state news agency reported on Friday.

An official source in the Giants Brigades, a southern resistance force, said: "The demining teams began on Friday in preparation for the return of life to the city of Hodeidah and facilitate the passage of citizens after the withdrawal of the militia from the city and its ports."

The source explained that teams managed to remove hundreds of mines and improvised explosive devices planted by the militia at the entrances to the city of Hodeidah in an operation to open safe roads for citizens to enter the city after the Houthi militia's withdrawal.

Elsewhere, the army clashed with Houthi militia in Damt district of Dhale governorate, Saudi news agency SPA reported, where at least 25 militia fighters were killed and wounded.



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Yemen's Houthi militia continues to violate Hodeidah ceasefire: Arab coalition  
Yemen govt to pay civil servants in militia-held Hodeidah

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## Egyptian forces kill 40 suspected militants after tourist bus bombed

Sat, 2018-12-29 10:43

CAIRO: Egypt's Interior Ministry said on Saturday that security forces killed 40 militants in three separate incidents in North Sinai and Giza, a day after a bombing on a Vietnamese tourist bus in Giza killed four people.

Large quantities of weapons and explosives were found during the raids, the state news agency said.

Militants reportedly planned attacks against Egypt's security forces, tourism and Christian places of worship.

On Friday, a roadside bomb hit a tourist bus in an area near the Giza Pyramids, killing two Vietnamese tourists and wounding 12 others.

The bombing, less than 4 km from the pyramids, on the outskirts of Cairo, is the first deadly attack against foreign tourists in Egypt for more than a year and comes as the tourism sector, a vital source of foreign currency, recovers from a sharp drop in visitor numbers since the country's 2011 uprising.

The bus was traveling in the Marioutiyah area near the pyramids when the crude roadside bomb, concealed by a wall, went off. The wounded included 10 Vietnamese tourists. The other two wounded were the Egyptian bus driver and the guide.

The ministry did not say whether the suspected militants were connected to Friday's attack, but said its forces killed 30 people during raids on their hideouts in Giza where it said "terrorist elements" were planning a series of attacks targeting state institutions and the tourism industry.

Security forces also killed 10 suspected militants in North Sinai, where the country is fighting an insurgency led by Daesh.

State news agency MENA said that the suspects were killed in a gunbattle.

The ministry did not give any details about the suspects' identity or whether there had been any casualties or injuries among the security forces. The statement said the three raids took place simultaneously.

Events such as the bombing of a Russian airliner shortly after it took off from Sharm el Sheikh in 2015, killing all 224 people on board, caused tourist numbers to Egypt to plunge.

There are still no direct flights from major tourist markets such as Britain and Russia to the country's biggest Red Sea resort, Sharm el Sheikh, since that attack.

The government says fighting extremist militants is a priority as it works to restore stability after the years of turmoil that followed the "Arab Spring" protests of 2011.

Egypt's military and police launched a major campaign against militant groups in February, targeting the Sinai Peninsula as well as southern areas and the border with Libya.



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Shoura Council speaker lauds Saudi-Egyptian ties 3 die as roadside bomb targets tourist bus near Pyramids in Egypt