

UK, EU warn Israel over West Bank evictions, demolitions

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Sat, 2020-11-07 18:26

LONDON: The UK and EU have warned Israel over its campaign to turn a West Bank region into a “firing zone for training exercises.”

Israel has faced increasing scrutiny in recent weeks after it pushed forward with evictions and demolitions across the West Bank.

Masafer Yatta is one of the poorest areas in the occupied Palestinian territory. Traditional shepherd villages and caves that make up the region rely on an NGO-funded water supply and solar panels.

Palestinian shepherds rejected Israel’s proposal of “part-time” living arrangements for residents.

Muhammad Moussa Abu Aram, a Masafer Yatta resident, said he dreaded being forced to leave his home, adding that “every aspect of life is difficult here” due to Israeli military activity.

Both the UK and EU have condemned Israel’s demolition campaign. Sven Kuhn von Burgsdorff, EU representative to Palestine, said during a recent visit to the region: “We call on Israel not to carry out demolitions in the communities, which are highly vulnerable.”

He added: “Displacing the communities would be in contravention with Israel’s obligations as an occupying power under international humanitarian law.”

A British consulate spokesman in Jerusalem said: “Demolitions and evictions cause unnecessary suffering to Palestinians and damage the prospects of a two-state solution.”

Brussels and London have sent envoys to inspect recent Israeli actions in the area. Meanwhile, the UN announced on Thursday: “So far in 2020, 689 structures have been demolished across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.”

West Bank resident Yasser Abu Al-Kbash told America’s National Public Radio that the recent demolitions were deliberately timed.

“I am 99 percent certain this was taking advantage of the US elections. There were no journalists around,” he said.



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Israel razes most of Palestinian Bedouin village in West Bank on US election day
Palestinian fires on Israel troops in West Bank, shot dead: army

[UAE amends laws on personal status, civil transactions and criminal procedures](#)

Sat, 2020-11-07 16:31

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates (UAE) announced on Saturday amendments to its personal status, civil transaction and penal and criminal procedure laws.

The amendments come as part of the UAE's efforts to develop its legislative

and investment environment and to foster tolerance, Emirates News Agency (WAM) reported.

The new laws, which were approved by President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, include:

- Allowing non-citizens to choose the laws that would apply to them regarding inheritance in the personal status law
- Decriminalizing acts in the penal code that do not cause harm to others
- Allowing the federal public prosecutor the right to determine misdemeanors and irregularities that are subject to the penal code
- Abolishing the article that provides mitigating excuses for committers of so-called 'honor crimes' and subjecting them to provisions that apply to murder crimes in the penal code

The amendments to personal status and civil transaction codes aim to ensure the stability of the financial interests of foreign investors in UAE, according to WAM, while amendments to the penal code and criminal procedure law aim to protect "personal liberties and societal security."

A number of amendments to the penal code decriminalize acts that do not cause harm to others and lift ambiguity from texts that considered these acts as punishable by law.

The amendments also expand the scope of the application of the criminal order so that the federal public prosecutor, in agreement with public prosecutors in local judicial authorities, has the right to determine misdemeanors that are subject to provisions of the penal code.

They aim to facilitate procedures and alleviate pressure on the judiciary system, especially in cases of minor crimes.

The laws are effective immediately and, according to WAM, reflect the progressive measures to improve living standards for people from around the world living in the UAE.

With the UAE home to more than 190 nationalities, amendments to existing laws and the introduction of the new laws seek to allow non-Emirati residents to have their personal affairs dealt with according to the law of their home country and ensuring the UAE is accommodating to their needs, WAM reported.



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UAE law targets sexual harassment, forced labor Social media 'influencers' are being reined in under new UAE laws – will other Gulf nations follow lead?

[French minister holds Tunisia talks on return of extremists](#)

Author:

Caroline Nelly Perrot and Kaouther Larbi | AFP

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1604691580806392300

Fri, 2020-11-06 19:37

TUNIS: Tunisia said Friday it would take back from France its citizens suspected of being extremists, after last week's deadly attack in Nice allegedly carried out by a Tunisian terrorist.

But Interior Minister Taoufik Charfeddine, following talks with his visiting French counterpart Gerald Darmanin, said their return would be conditional. The former French colony is "prepared to receive any Tunisian," Charfeddine

said.

"But this must be done in line with conditions and regulations" under international laws and in "preserving the dignity of the Tunisian" being returned, Charfeddine told reporters.

Sources close to Darmanin said ahead of the talks that he would submit to authorities a list of some 20 Tunisians who France wants to expel, on the basis that they had been convicted on terrorism charges or were suspected of extremist inclinations.

The French interior minister is due to visit Algeria on Sunday on a similar mission.

Public opinion in Tunisia is hostile toward the return of suspected militants, and authorities have refused the return of their citizens from France on the basis of travel restrictions linked to the coronavirus pandemic.

Tunisian nationals have constituted a significant proportion of foreign terrorists in Syria, Iraq and Libya over the past decade.

In 2015, the United Nations said that some 5,000 Tunisians had flocked mainly to Syria and Libya to join Daesh, while authorities in Tunis gave a lower figure of 3,000.

Their return has been a cause of concern in Tunisia, which has been under a state of emergency following a string of Daesh-claimed attacks in 2015 and 2016.

Darmanin's visit to Tunis was scheduled some time ago but it took on new urgency following the October 29 killing of three people at a church in the southern French city of Nice.

The alleged perpetrator of that attack, 21-year-old Brahim Aouissaoui, who arrived illegally in Europe in late September, is not the first Tunisian suspected of carrying out a deadly extremist attack in Europe.

In 2016, 31-year-old Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel plowed a truck into a Bastille Day crowd on the Nice seafront, killing 86 people.

Later that year fellow Tunisian citizen Anis Amri, 24, carried out a similar attack at a Berlin Christmas market, killing 12 people.

Daesh claimed both men as its followers.

Darmanin also met Tunisian President Kais Saied who stressed that his country would seek to find a "solution to obstacles that may arise" in the face of expulsions from France.

Several non-governmental organizations released a petition charging that European governments were "pressuring" Tunisia to take back its citizens. The groups, including the Tunisian League of Human Rights, said European countries are "taking advantage of the fear sparked by the crimes committed by terrorists to get rid of illegal migrants."

Darmanin is expected to discuss illegal migration in Algeria and also in a later visit to Malta.

Illegal sea crossings to Europe from Tunisia have been on the rise, largely driven by economic woes after a 2011 popular revolution that many hoped would bring change.

Sources close to Darmanin said the expulsions from France will also target common law criminals and would take into account "hygiene protocols" due to the coronavirus pandemic.

According to the sources, 70 percent of over 230 foreigners illegally in France and suspected of radicalism are from the Maghreb region, which

includes Tunisia and Algeria, and from Russia.



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Tunisian family of alleged Nice knifeman in disbelief over attack
French Muslims feel fear and alienation after Nice attack

Protester killed in southern Iraq as tensions flare again

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By NABIL AL-JURANI | AP

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1604690317066286800

Fri, 2020-11-06 19:00

BASRA: Iraqi security forces opened fire during clashes with hundreds of protesters in the southern city of Basra on Friday, killing one demonstrator and wounding several others as tensions flared once again, hospital officials said.

The clashes erupted after some of the protesters tried to set up tents in a public square, a week after similar, previously erected protest tents in Basra and Baghdad had been removed.

Dozens of young Iraqis were seen running away in panic after the shots were fired in Basra. The slain protester was identified as Omar Al-Thiabi, a 29-year-old unemployed Iraqi.

Last Saturday, Iraqi forces cleared out sit-in tents from Baghdad's central Tahrir Square that had been the epicenter of anti-government mass protests that erupted last year. They also removed tents in Basra's Bahriya Square and in other southern cities that have seen major protests throughout the past year.

The removal of the tents has led to tensions and protesters in Basra have been trying to erect them again, holding demonstrations in the city for the past three days. They are also demanding the sacking of the governor and an investigation into previous killings of protesters.

The hospital officials said seven protesters were wounded in Friday's clashes. They spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

More than 500 people were killed during the months-long protest movement that began in October 2019 in Baghdad and across the mainly Shiite south, many of them demonstrators shot by Iraqi security forces.

Despite reaching unprecedented numbers in late 2019 and successfully mounting pressure on the country's elites, the anti-government protests have been largely dormant in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. Activists also blamed the drop in numbers on a violent crackdown by Iraqi security forces

and militia groups, as well as kidnappings and targeted assassinations.





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Eight Syrian ministers added to EU sanctions list

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Fri, 2020-11-06 15:56

BRUSSELS: The EU on Friday added eight ministers from the new Syrian government formed in August to its sanctions blacklist for their role in President Bashar Assad's violent repression of civilians.

The decision by the EU's 27 member countries bans the ministers from traveling to Europe and will see their assets frozen.

The EU's official journal on Friday added the names of the ministers of oil and mineral resources, industry, health, agriculture and three ministers of state.

The ministers of finance, justice, trade, transport, culture, education and water resources had already been added on October 16.

The new government of Prime Minister Hussein Arnous, who has been on this list since 2014, is the fifth to be formed in Syria since the beginning of the conflict in 2011.

With the additions, the crisis in Syria has put 288 people and 70 entities under EU sanctions.

EU sanctions have been in force against the Assad regime since December 2011 and are subject to annual review.

The Syrian conflict erupted in early 2011 when Assad's forces staged a brutal crackdown on anti-government protests, sparking violence that has since claimed hundreds of thousands of lives.

After nine years of war, Assad controls some 70 percent of Syrian territory.



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