

Car bomb kills 7 in northeastern Syria

Author:

Associated Press

ID:

1601142364501851100

Sat, 2020-09-26 17:43

BEIRUT: A car bomb killed at least seven civilians in a Turkish-controlled area of northeastern Syria on Saturday, Syria's state-run news agency and a war monitor reported.

SANA said the blast went off at the southern entrance to the city of Ras Al-Ayn. Turkish troops and allied Syrian fighters captured the area last October when Ankara invaded northeastern Syria to drive away Syrian Kurdish fighters from the shared border.

Ankara views the Kurdish fighters as terrorists for their links to a Kurdish insurgency inside Turkey. The fighters had however partnered with the US against the Daesh group.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Syria war monitor, said seven people were killed and ten of others were injured in the car-bomb explosion near the industrial area in the south of Ras Al-Ayn city.

No further details were immediately available.

Nearly half a million people have been killed in Syria's nine-year war which began as a popular uprising against the rule of Syrian President Bashar Assad and turned into an armed insurgency following a brutal crackdown.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Syria](#)

[Ras Al-Ayn](#)

'What's a UN journalist?': New film on Syrian refugees sparks ire for lack of Arab casting US to provide \$720 million Syria aid, \$108 million for South Sudan

[Egypt launches campaign to promote nature reserves and ecotourism](#)

Author:

Zaynab Khojji

ID:

1601139966001705900

Sat, 2020-09-26 20:26

CAIRO: Egypt has launched a campaign to promote nature reserves, raise environmental awareness and support ecotourism.

The Ministry of Environment said the campaign was in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the Ministry of Information, as well as with the participation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Integration of Biodiversity in Egyptian Tourism project funded by the Global Environment Facility.

The campaign was launched from the Ras Mohamed Nature Reserve in South Sinai in the presence of Minister of Environment Yasmine Fouad, Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Khaled Al-Anani, and Minister of State for Information Osama Heikal, in addition to 30 ambassadors and representatives from foreign embassies in Egypt.

It aims to support ecotourism, encourage visits to reserves and help people to learn about the local population, including their culture and heritage. The ministry said the campaign would implement an integrated awareness and communications plan to support responsible and sustainable environmental tourism, and work toward pumping new investments into this sector in a way that supported the sustainability of natural resources.

Fouad said the campaign would run for three years and promote ecotourism through a website and social media accounts, and that there would be a new visitor center in the Ras Mohamed and Fayoum reserves. People from the local community would also be involved through sustainable job opportunities.

The minister said that natural reserves were receiving the attention and support of the political leadership, therefore the reserves were developed and managed according to international standards in order to preserve them, maximize economic, social and cultural development and preserve Egypt's rich biological diversity in a way that supported the environment and national economy by attracting more investment in the ecotourism sector.

Heikal said the campaign was an opportunity to clarify the message that tourism did not undermine efforts to develop and preserve the environment, including nature reserves, as an attractive source for tourism. Al-Anani said there was ministry cooperation in many fields to revitalize tourism, which is one of the pillars of the national economy, including the Ministry of Environment's decision to reduce fees for day trips to reserves in the governorates of South Sinai and the Red Sea, and fees for daily cruises until the end of next March.





Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Egypt](#)

[ecotourism](#)
[nature reserves](#)

Egypt fitness startup eyes new market in coronavirus protective gear
COVID-19 kills an entire Egyptian family after a wedding

[Iran and Iraq commit to boosting border cooperation and trade](#)

Author:

Associated Press

ID:

1601121195130138800

Sat, 2020-09-26 11:25

DUBAI: Iran and Iraq on Saturday pledged to improve border cooperation and boost trade between the two neighbours that has been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic.

“We remain committed to increasing political, economic and cultural cooperation between the two countries,” President Hassan Rouhani told visiting Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein, according to a government website.

Hussein called for implementing bilateral accords in areas including border cooperation, transportation and trade between the two countries, the website said.

The pandemic has led to border closures and disruptions to trade and visits by millions of pilgrims and tourists.

Iran, which shares a long border with Iraq, has been the epicentre of the virus in the Middle East but the spread has also accelerated in Iraq.

Iran is one of Iraq’s biggest trading partners. Both countries’ economies are in crisis. Iran continues to suffer from US sanctions and Iraq’s economy has been battered by years of wars, sanctions and an extremist insurgency.

Tehran also used to meeting to denounce the US military presence in the region.

“We consider the presence of American forces in the region, whether in Iraq, Afghanistan or the southern states of the Persian Gulf, to the detriment of security and stability in the region,” Rouhani said.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Iraq](#)

[Iran](#)

[Palestine's Mahmoud Abbas asks UN for international peace conference next year](#)

Author:

AFP

ID:

1601044223913172500

Fri, 2020-09-25 14:11

UNITED NATIONS, New York: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has called for an international conference early next year to “launch a genuine peace process” while criticizing the recent decision of two Arab countries to normalize relations with Israel.

In an address before the UN General Assembly on Friday, Abbas seemed to acknowledge the growing international weariness with the decades-old conflict, saying “I wonder what more I can say after all I’ve said on

countless occasions.”

The Palestinians have rejected President Donald Trump’s proposal to end the conflict that overwhelmingly favors Israel, and have officially cut off contacts with both the US and Israel. Instead, they have called for a multilateral peace process based on UN resolutions and past agreements. They have also rejected the decision of the UAE and Bahrain to normalize ties with Israel, viewing it as a betrayal of the longstanding Arab consensus that recognition of Israel should only come in exchange for territorial concessions.

In his speech, Abbas said the agreements, signed at the White House earlier this month, are a “violation” of the “principles of a just and lasting solution under international law.”

Abbas spoke before a large plaque reading “State of Palestine.” The Palestinians upgraded their status to “observer state” at the UN in 2012. Abbas closed by saying “there can be no peace, no security, no stability, no coexistence in our region without an end to the occupation.”

“We will not bow down. We will not surrender. We will not compromise. And we shall triumph,” he said.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Palestine](#)

[Israel](#)

[United Nations](#)

[United Nations general assembly](#)

[UN General Assembly \(UNGA\)](#)

[UNGA 2020](#)

Abbas forum decries ‘dagger in the back of Palestinians’ Middle East peace talks remain priority, Macron says after call with Abbas

[At least 13 people drown in migrant shipwreck off Libya](#)

Author:

Associated Press

ID:

1601029717761833900

Fri, 2020-09-25 10:26

CAIRO: Over a dozen migrants trying to reach Europe drowned in the Mediterranean Sea when their small dinghy capsized off the coast of Libya, the United Nations reported Friday, the latest shipwreck to underscore the deadly risks facing those who flee the war-afflicted North African country. Libyan fishermen spotted the sinking boat late Thursday, said the International Organization for Migration, and managed to pull 22 people from the water, including those from Egypt, Bangladesh, Syria, Somalia and Ghana. But at least 13 of the other passengers were missing and presumed drowned. Three dead bodies were found floating in the water, including one Syrian man and woman. The boat had set off from the town of Zliten, east of the Libyan capital of Tripoli, late on Wednesday.

The Libyan Coast Guard said that it had ordered the rescue, and that search teams were scouring the area for more victims.

"So many boats are leaving these days, but autumn is a very difficult season," said Commodore Masoud Abdal Samad. "When it gets windy, it's deadly. It changes in an instant."

Following the 2011 uprising that ousted and killed longtime dictator Muammar Qaddafi, Libya has emerged as the dominant transit point for migrants hoping to get to Europe from Africa and the Middle East. Smugglers often pack desperate families into ill-equipped rubber boats that stall and founder along the perilous Central Mediterranean route. At least 20,000 people have died in those waters since 2014, according to the UN

Those who survived Friday's disaster were taken to the Tripoli port, where they received medical care for their burns, a common consequence of leaked engine fuel mixing with saltwater, said Safa Msehli, an IOM spokeswoman. Libyan authorities shepherded the survivors to the Zliten detention center, run by the Tripoli-based government's Interior Ministry. Migrants rescued at sea and returned to Libya routinely land in detention centers notorious for torture, extortion and abuse. Amnesty International revealed in a report Thursday that thousands of migrants have been forcibly disappeared from unofficial militia-run detention centers.

The shipwreck, the second to be recorded by the UN in as many weeks, "signals the need now more than ever for state-led search and rescue capacity to be redeployed and the need to support NGO vessels operating in a vacuum," said Msehli.

Since 2017, European countries, particularly Italy, have delegated most search-and-rescue responsibility to the Libyan Coast Guard, which intercepts migrant boats before they can reach European waters. Activists have lamented

that European authorities are increasingly blocking the work of nongovernmental rescue organizations that patrol the Mediterranean and seek to disembark at European ports.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Libya](#)

French ex-president Sarkozy loses challenge to cash-from-Libya case
Amnesty: Migrants face 'vicious cycle of cruelty' in Libya