

Libya's Tripoli-based PM Al-Sarraj to stand down

Wed, 2020-09-16 23:15

TRIPOLI: The prime minister of Libya's Tripoli-based government Fayez Al-Sarraj announced his intention to step down by the end of October in a speech delivered on state television on Wednesday.

"I declare my sincere desire to hand over my duties to the next executive authority no later than the end of October," he said.

"Hopefully, the dialogue committee will complete its work and choose a new presidential council and prime minister," he added.

Al-Sarraj is head of the Government of National Accord, based in Tripoli, while eastern Libya and much of the south is controlled by a rival administration.

He has headed the GNA since it was formed in 2015 as a result of a UN-backed political agreement aimed at uniting and stabilising Libya after the chaos that followed the 2011 uprising that ousted Muammar Qaddafi.

His resignation could add to political uncertainty in Tripoli or even infighting among the rival factions in the coalition that dominates western Libya.

However, it also comes in the context of a renewed push towards a political solution after the GNA in June ended the rival Libyan National Army's 14-month assault on Tripoli and forced it to retreat from the capital.

The war has drawn in regional and international powers with the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Russia backing the LNA and Turkey supporting the GNA.



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Egypt discusses resuming oil exports with Libyan officials
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[Gargash: UAE-Israel relationship will help Palestinians, but they must engage](#)

Author:

Wed, 2020-09-16 22:56

DUBAI: The UAE's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs has promised that his country's relationship with Israel will be comprehensive and deep, and will ultimately help the Palestinian cause.

In an online briefing attended by Arab News on Wednesday, Anwar Gargash discussed his country's commitment to wide-ranging diplomatic, economic and cultural exchanges with Israel, made possible by the Abraham Accords signed on Tuesday.

The Abraham Accords will normalize the relationship between the UAE and Israel, and have been widely hailed as a "historic moment" in the story of the modern Middle East.

On the future relationship, Gargash said: "This will be a very, very warm peace. There will be normal diplomatic relations – our diplomats throughout the world have already been inundated with requests to meet with Israeli diplomats. We have authorized many of these meetings."

This extensive diplomatic opening, he said, "will be done within days, rather than months."

In a wide-ranging discussion hosted by the UK's Emirates Society, Gargash also said that the UAE "is determined that this will be an across-the-board relationship," incorporating "tourism, banking, trade, investment, health and technology," into a wide-ranging bilateral relationship.

He said this will "break the taboo of a Gulf state having relations with Israel."

Gargash also rallied against tribal differences that obstruct regional peace and prosperity.

Fundamental in overcoming this, he said, is the importance of "shattering the psychological barrier" of Muslim and Jewish coexistence.

Once this barrier has been broken, "other tasks will not be easy, but they will be more manageable."

He said the Palestinian question is one such issue.

The UAE remains committed to a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict, but Gargash said it is "difficult to have leverage over somebody without communication.

"From our perspective ... in the medium-term (the Palestinians) will find out that the UAE, through its new links forged in this relationship, will be able to help them more."

However, Gargash made clear that it is "extremely important that the Palestinians engage."

He said their "empty chair approach" has not been helpful thus far, and will not be in the future, and warned that Israeli annexation of up to 30 percent of the West Bank – an initiative suspended as a result of the Abraham accords – could resume within five years if the Palestinians do not re-engage diplomatically.

While the Palestinians are chiefly responsible in this regard, Gargash also pointed to key players in the international community that can assist in the pursuit of this goal.

In particular, British and US recognition of a Palestinian state “would be both admirable and important,” he said.

“Fundamentally, it is the Israelis and Palestinians that must solve this issue,” he added.

This cooperation, he hopes, will lead to the peaceful coexistence of both an Israeli and a Palestinian state.

“I think we are all better off with a two-state solution, and I think we should all work towards that,” Gargash said.



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UAE and Bahrain start a new chapter in Arab-Israeli ties
UAE official says Israel accord should dispel doubts over F-35 sale

Egyptian minister discusses agreements to finance Sinai Development Program

Author:

Wed, 2020-09-16 22:42

CAIRO: Egypt has signed three agreements worth around \$885 million with Arab funds since the start of the year to finance the Sinai Peninsula Development Program.

Egyptian Minister of International Cooperation Rania Al-Mashat said on Tuesday that the agreements would finance the program, support structural reform and improve the efficiency of the government's public financial management, as well as strengthen the Ministry of Health's capacity to combat the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The agreements are part of the International Cooperation Ministry's efforts, through economic diplomacy, to provide financing for development projects in accordance with the priorities of the National Development Agenda 2030 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and to enhance cooperation with development partners and strengthen economic relations with international and regional organizations.

Al-Mashat said in a statement that an agreement worth \$637.9 million was signed with the Arab Monetary Fund to support structural and institutional reform to raise the efficiency of public financial management in line with the country's economic reform program.

She added that this agreement falls within the framework of the economic reform program begun in 2016 to protect the economy and has five main objectives: To enhance the preparation and implementation of the state budget; develop tax administration; strengthen government procurement management; improve the social protection system; and enhance general debt management.

The minister highlighted another agreement worth about \$243.2 million with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, which will be used to establish a clean-water system for the Bahr Al-Baqar drain, within the Sinai Peninsula Development Plan.

She emphasized that the project will increase agricultural production, link the Sinai Peninsula with the Delta region, and provide job opportunities and improved services. A navigation channel of 20 square kilometers will be established, as will pumping stations to transport Bahr Al-Baqar sewage water from the west of the Suez Canal to the east; a treatment plant; farms; facilities for agricultural processing and preparing studies, designs and tenders; and consultancy services to oversee the project.

The estimated cost of the project to establish the Bahr Al-Baqar drainage system is about \$1 billion. The Ministry of International Cooperation had previously signed three agreements in the same framework, one with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development worth \$238 million and two with the Kuwait Fund for Development worth \$255 million.

Al-Mashat added that a grant agreement worth \$3.3 million had been signed with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development to support efforts to combat COVID-19.

Egypt's cooperation with Arab funds began in 1974, since when deals worth a total of roughly \$12.5 billion have been signed, including a current portfolio of \$6.9 billion, which includes the Kuwait Fund for Development, the Saudi Fund for Development, the Abu Dhabi Fund for development, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, and the Khalifa Fund for Enterprise Development.



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Women in Egypt's restive Sinai makes Bedouin face masks
Egyptian forces kill 21 militants in North Sinai

Yemen warring parties to travel to Switzerland to discuss prisoner releases

Author:

Reuters

ID:

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Tue, 2020-09-15 14:58

UNITED NATIONS: Delegations from Yemen's warring parties are due to meet in Switzerland this week for talks on a UN-backed prisoner exchange deal, which UN Yemen envoy Martin Griffiths said on Tuesday he hopes will result in the release of some detainees.

Griffiths told the UN Security Council that "logistical arrangements permitting" the talks would resume in Switzerland this week between the two delegations. A UN source said the talks were due to start on Thursday.

"The parties committed to release conflict-related prisoners and detainees back in 2018 in Stockholm, and furthered their discussions to fulfill that commitment in Amman earlier this year," Griffiths told the council. "What I hope is that this meeting will actually result in the release of some prisoners."

Mohammed Abdulsalam, chief negotiator of the Houthi movement, told Reuters his group's committee is set to leave Sanaa on a UN plane.

The Iran-allied Houthis and Yemen's Saudi-backed government are trying to reach an agreement to end a years-long war and ease a humanitarian crisis in the Arabian Peninsula's poorest country.

Griffiths told the 15-member UN Security Council he sent an "advanced draft" of a cease-fire deal to Yemen's warring parties last week and "now is the time for the parties to swiftly conclude the negotiations."

He also said the political importance of gas-rich Marib – the last government stronghold where fighting has raged over the past year – should not be underestimated and that "military shifts and consequences and events in Marib have ripple effects on dynamics of the conflict across Yemen."



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Egypt supports Saudi efforts to solve Yemeni crisis

[Dubai Police arrest man dancing at local cafe in viral video](#)

Tue, 2020-09-15 17:51

DUBAI: An Emirati man has been arrested in Dubai for dancing in public at a local cafe after footage of his performance was widely circulated online. In the clip, the man dressed in the traditional white thobe and headwear is seen dancing to local music next to the table he was sat at in a cafe in Deira. The audience around him can be seen clapping, with some taking videos of the performance.

Dubai Police said they arrested the young Emirati man for dancing "indecently" at the cafe on the charge of committing a "Public Indecent Act", their Twitter account said.

The statement said the man dancing in the video has been identified, as well as the person who took the video, and both have been arrested.

Dubai Police arrest a man for committing an indecent act publicly.
pic.twitter.com/BrvvIop9oe

– Dubai Police شرطة دبي (@DubaiPoliceHQ) [September 13, 2020](#)

Police said the person who shot and posted the video on social media “violated public morality” by doing so, and this is a crime punishable by anti-cybercrime laws in the emirate. Brigadier Jamal Salem Al Jallaf, Director of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) at Dubai Police, said Article (358) of the UAE Penal code states that whoever openly commits an indecent and disgraceful act shall be punished by detention for a period of at least six months.



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