

# Trump welcomes Egyptian proposal for Libya ceasefire

Wed, 2020-06-10 19:15

LONDON: US President Donald Trump welcomed Egypt's proposal for a ceasefire in Libya on Wednesday during a phonecall with President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi.

Egypt called for a truce starting on Monday, as part of an initiative which also proposed an elected leadership council for Libya.

Earlier on Wednesday, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo welcomed the resumption of talks led by the United Nations between Libya's warring sides and urged speedy negotiations to achieve a ceasefire.

"The agreement between the GNA and LNA to re-enter UN security talks was a good first step, very positive," Pompeo said in a news conference, referring to the Government of National Accord and Libyan National Army, led by eastern-based commander Khalifa Haftar.

## **Opinion**

This section contains relevant reference points, placed in (Opinion field)

"Quick and good-faith negotiations are now required to implement a ceasefire and relaunch the UN-led intra-Libyan political talks," Pompeo said.

The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) on June 2 said Libya's warring parties had agreed to restart ceasefire talks.

*(With Reuters)*



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## [Iraq's new PM visits Mosul mosque destroyed by Daesh](#)

Wed, 2020-06-10 18:32

CAIRO: Iraq's new prime minister arrived in Mosul on Wednesday, as the city marked the sixth anniversary since it was captured by Daesh.

Mustafa Al-Khadhimi was seen standing inside Mosul's iconic Al-Nuri Mosque, from where the leader of Daesh announced his self-proclaimed "caliphate" in 2014.

Three years later, Daesh blew up the 12th century building, partially destroying it.

"Iraqis will not allow a repetition of what happened in Mosul," the prime

minister, who was appointed last month, said.

During the visit, the first to the city in his tenure, Al-Kadhimi reopened the city's Al-Hureya Bridge (Bridge of Liberty) and the Civilization Museum in Mosul.

He also met with military commanders and senior officials, saying that "corruption and mismanagement" have contributed to past disasters in Mosul. Al-Khadhimi also vowed to prevent the militant group from occupying the city again.

"Iraqi forces will continue to carry out military operations to pursue terrorist cells and protect Iraq's security and stability," he said.

Daesh swept into Iraq in 2014 capturing cities across northern and central Iraq, including Mosul, the second largest city and the capital of Nineveh province.

During the extremists occupation and the fighting to drive them out, Mosul suffered widespread destruction and extensive loss of life.









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## [Pompeo demands Iran release US detainees, urges Libya ceasefire](#)

Wed, 2020-06-10 17:13

LONDON: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo demanded on Wednesday that Iran release US detainees.

Last week, Tehran released US Navy veteran Michael White, who had been detained in the country since his arrest in July 2018, and in exchange the Washington released Majid Taheri on Monday, an Iranian-American scientist detained for 16 months for violating US sanctions.

Pompeo thanked US Special Representative for Iran Brian Hook for securing his release and the Swiss government for their assistance.

"The work is not done, Baquer Namazi, Siamak Namazi, and Morad Tahbaz are Americans still wrongfully detained by the Iranian regime. Tehran must release them immediately," Pompeo said during a press conference to discuss an annual state department report on religious freedoms. Commenting on Libya, Pompeo welcomed the resumption of talks led by the United Nations and called on Libya's warring parties to continue to negotiate in good faith. He said the agreement between the weak internationally recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) and the Libyan National Army, led by eastern commander Khalifa Haftar, to reenter UN security talks "was a good first step, very positive. Quick and good faith negotiations are now required to implement a cease-fire and relaunch the UN-led intra-Libyan political talks." Egypt called for a cease-fire starting on Monday, as part of an initiative which also proposed an elected leadership council for Libya. Pompeo's comments come a day after European ministers also urged all parties to stop the fighting, end all military operations, and "engage constructively in the 5+5 negotiations," they said in a joint statement, in reference to a joint military commission that helped broker the cease-fire in Cairo earlier this month. Pompeo said that "putting Libya on the path to economic recovery means preserving Libyan oil facilities and strong access to the national oil corporation." Libya has been mired by fighting and chaos since Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi was toppled in 2011. "It's time, it's time for all Libyans on all sides to act, so neither Russian or any other country can interfere in Libya's sovereignty for its own gain," he added. Also on Wednesday, Germany's ambassador to Libya, Oliver Owczar, met with Haftar and expressed concern over the ongoing military confrontations and their worrying impact on the civilian population.

In today's meeting with Gen Haftar I expressed concern about ongoing military confrontations and their worrisome impact on civilian population. I encouraged a constructive resumption of 5+5 talks towards a reliable ceasefire, thereby also addressing structural security concerns. [pic.twitter.com/fg46UwPpLA](https://pic.twitter.com/fg46UwPpLA)

– Oliver Owczar (@GermanAmbLBY) [June 10, 2020](#)

"I encouraged a constructive resumption of 5+5 talks toward a reliable cease-fire, thereby also addressing structural security concerns," he said in a tweet.

On Iraq, Pompeo said the government has agreed to a strategic dialogue proposed in April starting from Thursday.

Pompeo said Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, David Hale, will lead the discussion with representatives from the departments of defense, treasury, energy and other agencies along with their Iraqi counterparts, "in keeping with previous dialogues based on our 2008 strategic framework agreement."

“With new threats on the horizon, including the global coronavirus pandemic, collapsed oil prices and a large budget deficit, it’s imperative that the United States and Iraq meet as strategic partners to plan a way forward for the mutual benefit of each of our two nations,” he said.

Pompeo also spoke with UN Secretary-General António Guterres on Wednesday and “discussed steps to end the conflict and advance a negotiated political solution in Libya, the urgent need to renew the Syria humanitarian cross-border mechanism, and the importance of extending the UN arms embargo on Iran,” the state department said in a statement.



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## Lebanon to reopen airport in July and send public sector employees back to work

Tue, 2020-06-09 23:09

BEIRUT: Lebanon has announced that it will reopen Rafik Hariri International Airport in Beirut in early July.

Prime Minister Hassan Diab said during a meeting of the tourism sector's representatives on Tuesday: "We will work to resume flights to the Arabian Gulf region, and we will focus on countries conducting PCR tests to detect coronavirus infections."

The Cabinet Office said on Tuesday that all public-sector employees should return to their workplaces while "taking the necessary measures to prevent coronavirus."

The total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Lebanon reached 1,368 as of Tuesday after 18 new cases were recorded. All of the new cases had been in contact with infected people. The death toll stands at 30.

The government is trying to improve the economic situation, which has worsened with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, by promoting medical tourism, Diab told the heads of tourist establishments, restaurants and hotels.

The leaders of the tourism sector's syndicates complained of the decline in their businesses due to the deterioration of the lira. The president of the Union of Owners of Restaurants, Cafes, Amusements and Patisseries, Tony Al-Rami, said that "80 percent of restaurants, including top restaurants and establishments, have not been able to open."

The president of the Syndicate of Tourist Establishments in South Lebanon, Ali Tabajah, said that "95 percent of the establishments in the south could not open because they were unable to pay rent or even buy goods."

The head of the Syndicate of Car Rental Agencies, Mohammed Daqduq, highlighted that "25 percent of car rental companies have closed, and there are 700 unemployed families because this sector depends 76 percent on expatriates and foreign tourists."

The head of the Syndicate of Maritime Firms, Jean Beiruty, said: "Domestic tourism is not possible due to the high exchange rate of the dollar, and 80 percent of maritime firms did not open because their maintenance licenses have not been completed."

Jean Abboud, president of the Association of Travel and Tourist Agents, warned that "the inability to transfer money abroad will lead companies to withdraw from Lebanon."

Ibrahim Al-Zaidi, head of the Syndicate of Restaurants in the Southern Suburbs of Beirut and Mount Lebanon, said that "the main problem lies in the dollar exchange rate."

"The victim is not the restaurant sector alone, but also the employees who lost their salaries," he said.

Following the disturbances during the protests on Saturday former Prime Minister Saad Hariri attended a meeting held on Tuesday by the Supreme Islamic Legislative Council in Dar Al-Fatwa. Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdul Latif Derian presided over the meeting. The council, which includes Sunni figures, called on the government to "impose control on the entire Lebanese territory, including stopping smuggling through the Lebanese-Syrian border, adjusting the exchange rate of the dollar, and addressing the random price hikes that are burdening citizens."

The council accused "infiltrators, who were among the peaceful protesters last Saturday, of attacking the security forces and carrying out acts of sabotage of public and private property." The council demanded that an investigation be held and the instigators of the riots that took place in Beirut's streets be held accountable.

The council warned against "igniting the fire of sectarian strife in light of the offensive slogans that targeted a religious figure," demanding that the perpetrators be held accountable. It also called on Muslims in Lebanon to "rise above the strife-inciting hate speech and adhere to the spiritual and patriotic values that make Lebanon the country of coexistence."

In the Palace of Justice in Beirut, the head of the Beirut Bar Association, Melhem Khalaf, stressed that "dialogue is the only way to restore what has been destroyed by the crises." He said: "We will not allow our unity to be targeted."



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## [European powers call for end to military operations in Libya](#)

Tue, 2020-06-09 23:05

BERLIN: The European Union's top diplomat has urged all conflict parties in Libya to immediately stop all military operations and engage constructively in peace negotiations.

As Turkish drones helped drive eastern Libyan forces back from Tripoli this month, Russia was said to be reinforcing the forces with warplanes, raising the stakes in a stalemated civil war that has partitioned the African country.

Recent weeks have marked a turning point in a complex conflict between two uneasy coalitions that are each backed by an array of foreign states whose competing regional agendas make them unwilling to countenance defeat. In a joint statement with the foreign ministers of Germany, France and Italy issued on Tuesday, the EU's top diplomat, Josep Borrell, called on the conflict parties in Libya to swiftly agree on a cease-fire and withdraw all foreign forces, mercenaries and military equipment. The joint statement followed increased diplomatic efforts by Germany to push for a political solution to the Libya crisis. Chancellor Angela Merkel earlier on Tuesday expressed her concern in a telephone call with Russian President Vladimir Putin over the recent escalation of fighting in Libya. On Monday, Merkel discussed the situation in conflict-wracked Libya with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi. Merkel told El-Sisi that United Nations-backed negotiations must remain the key aim of a peace process in Libya, where the internationally recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) is fighting General Khalifa Haftar's Libyan National Army in the east. On Saturday, El-Sisi proposed a new cease-fire after the Turkish-backed GNA won a series of rapid victories over Haftar's forces, dashing Haftar's bid to unite the country by force.



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