

# Turkey's Libya gas moves could upset Egypt, say experts

Mon, 2020-06-01 23:28

CAIRO: Turkey will start exploring Libya's coast for gas within three months, the country's Energy and Natural Resources Minister Fatih Donmez said, with experts saying the move will create tension with Egypt.

A dispute has been ongoing for several years between Turkey and Greece, Cyprus and Egypt regarding the ownership of natural resources in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The Turkish Petroleum Company has submitted an application to Libya's Government of National Accord (GNA) for permission to excavate in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The move could escalate the tension between Ankara and Cairo that was caused by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's support for the Muslim Brotherhood following the 2013 revolution in Egypt that overthrew a Brotherhood-affiliated president. It eventually led to public enmity between Erdogan and Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi.

Political expert Tariq Abboud said Turkey was suffering from a severe economic crisis and was relying on reconstruction projects and future investments in the country to fix the problem.

The Eastern Mediterranean is a coveted region because it contains a large amount of natural gas estimated at more than 100 trillion cubic meters and Ankara wanted a share of that, according to Abboud.

Ankara also wants to seize the value of compensation of suspended projects in Libya, estimated at hundreds of millions of dollars.

"This is in addition to Turkey benefiting from supplying Libya with weapons, despite UN Security Council resolution 1970 of March 2011 which calls on all member states of the world body to prevent the sale or supply of weapons and related items to Libya," he told Arab News.

"In addition, they also introduced Resolution 2420, which allows member states to inspect ships heading to or coming from Libya in order to prevent the entry of weapons into the country. But the reality is a completely different matter, as Greece stopped a ship heading to Libya from Turkey carrying explosive materials."

Energy expert Mohammed El-Wardany said Turkey had been angered by the East Mediterranean agreement EastMed which was reached between Greece, Cyprus and Israel. The deal aims to secure energy supplies in Europe through a 2,000 km pipeline.

El-Wardany believed that Turkey saw the accord as an obstacle to its own

attempts to expand control over the Eastern Mediterranean.

“It can be said that the Turkish-Libyan alliance came in response to that agreement,” he told Arab News.

“Turkey’s announcement that it will start exploration at this time is understandable. Turkey now consumes enormous amounts of energy annually, does not have sufficient resources, and imports the equivalent of \$50 billion on an annual basis. Despite the excavations carried out by Ankara, the region’s marine areas have no gas or oil fields. This led it to send ships to explore for gas off the coast of Cyprus, which Nicosia considered a provocation and illegal.”

Political analyst Jamal Shakra said that a direct confrontation between the two countries was unlikely, but that Egypt would move with its allies in the region to prevent Turkey from stealing what it had “no right to in the region.”



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# [Tunisia to open sea, air and land borders on June 27](#)

Author:

Reuters

ID:

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Mon, 2020-06-01 19:40

TUNIS: Tunisia will open its sea, land and air borders on June 27, authorities said on Monday, in hopes of rescuing its tourism industry as the coronavirus pandemic comes under control.

The government said also it will allow movement between cities again from Thursday.

The North African country has recorded 1,070 cases and 48 deaths, with only two people still in hospital.

Tunisia has forecast its economy will shrink up to 4.3% this year, the steepest drop since 1956 independence.

The important tourism sector could lose \$1.4 billion and 400,000 jobs this year due to the pandemic.



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## Israeli defence chief says he's preparing for consequences of West Bank annexations

Author:

Reuters

ID:

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Mon, 2020-06-01 15:56

JERUSALEM: Israeli Defence Minister Benny Gantz said on Monday he ordered the military to step up preparations for Israel's pending annexation of parts of the West Bank, a plan that could stoke Palestinian violence.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has pledged to begin cabinet discussions on July 1 on extending Israeli sovereignty to Jewish settlements and the Jordan Valley in the West Bank, occupied territory that Palestinians seek for a state.

Gantz's directive appeared to indicate that the centrist politician had either signed on to the move, or at least believed it would be inevitable, given right-wing support in the Netanyahu-led coalition cabinet.

In public remarks to legislators of his centrist Blue and White party, Gantz noted a recent uptick in anti-Israeli violence in the West Bank and the Palestinians' declaration last month that they were ending security cooperation with Israel over the annexation issue.

He said he had subsequently ordered the chief of staff, Lieutenant-General Aviv Kochavi, to "examine all the ramifications and the required preparations" stemming from moving ahead with the peace plan US President Donald Trump announced in January, a blueprint that could ease annexation.

In a separate written statement, Gantz said "preparations by the Israel Defence Forces should be stepped up ahead of pending diplomatic moves regarding the Palestinians".

The Palestinians have rejected Trump's proposal, under which the vast majority of West Bank settlements built by Israel on land captured in the 1967 Middle East war would be incorporated into "contiguous Israeli territory".

The Palestinians and most countries consider such settlements illegal. Israel disputes this.

The Trump plan also envisages a Palestinian state under near-complete Israeli security control, creating what Palestinians leaders say would be an unviable country.

Sami Abu Zuhri, an official with militant group Hamas which rules the Gaza Strip, another part of Palestinians' hoped-for future state, told Reuters: "The call of the occupation army to get ready for annexation of the West Bank

is a call for war, and the occupation will regret this crime, and soon realise they are committing a grave mistake.”



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UAE calls on Israel to halt West Bank annexation plan

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## [Abu Dhabi bans travel in, out and within emirate to limit coronavirus spread](#)

Sun, 2020-05-31 19:03

DUBAI: Abu Dhabi has banned travel into and out of the emirate and between its three regions from Tuesday.

The restrictions, announced by the Abu Dhabi Emergency and Crisis Committee, come into force on Tuesday and last for a week.

Both residents and nationals will not be allowed to travel between the areas of Abu Dhabi city, Al-Ain and Al-Dhafrah. The decision is meant to enhance the effectiveness of the “National Screening Program and reduce the spread of covid-19,” Abu Dhabi Media Office said. Exemptions are available by a special private permit for employees of vital sectors, or chronic disease patients heading to hospitals, and the transportation of goods.



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UAE to shorten COVID-19 prevention curfew by two hours Saudi Arabia's new cases slow down two weeks after reaching peak of 2,840

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## [Israeli defense minister apologizes for Palestinian's death](#)

Author:

Associated Press

ID:

1590934520009158100

Sun, 2020-05-31 13:51

JERUSALEM: Israel's defense minister apologized on Sunday for the Israeli police's deadly shooting of an unarmed Palestinian man who was autistic. The shooting of Iyad Halak, 32, in Jerusalem's Old City on Saturday, drew broad condemnations and revived complaints alleging excessive force by Israeli security forces.

Benny Gantz, who is also Israel's "alternate" prime minister under a power-sharing deal, made the remarks at the weekly meeting of the Israeli Cabinet. He was sat near Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who made no mention of the incident in his opening remarks.

"We are really sorry about the incident in which Iyad Halak was shot to death and we share in the family's grief," Gantz said. "I am sure this subject will be investigated swiftly and conclusions will be reached."

Halak's relatives said he had autism and was heading to a school for students with special needs where he studied each day when he was shot.

In a statement, Israeli police said they spotted a suspect "with a suspicious object that looked like a pistol." When he failed to obey orders to stop, officers opened fire, the statement said. Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld later said no weapon was found.

Israeli media reported the officers involved were questioned after the incident as per protocol and a lawyer representing one of them sent his condolences to the family in an interview with Israeli Army Radio.

Lone Palestinian attackers with no clear links to armed groups have carried out a series of stabbings, shootings and car-ramming attacks in recent years. Palestinians and Israeli human rights groups have long accused Israeli security forces of using excessive force in some cases, either by killing individuals who could have been arrested or using lethal force when their lives were not in danger.

Some pro-Palestinian activists compared Saturday's shooting to the recent cases of police violence in the US



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Israeli police kill disabled Palestinian in East Jerusalem