

Death of Algerian girl in 'faith healing' sparks outcry

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Sat, 2020-05-30 16:26

ALGIERS: A ten-year-old girl who died in eastern Algeria while undergoing faith healing appeared to suffer "blows and burns," a prosecutor said, sparking angry reactions online after the arrest of a man. The public prosecutor in Guelma, 500 kilometers (310 miles) east of the capital Algiers, announced a 28-year-old man had been arrested on Thursday after the death of the girl "who was abused during a Ruqya (faith healing) to which she was subjected in her family home."

The prosecutor did not disclose why the girl was subjected to the Ruqya, a practice often performed with the intention of treating the sick, "driving out a demon," providing protection from "the evil eye" or curing infertility. According to the prosecutor's statement, cited by local media, the girl died after being taken to hospital in Guelma.

"The girl's body bore signs of blows and burns," the statement said.

The public prosecutor ordered an autopsy and an investigation into the child's death, the statement said.

While faith healing is permitted in Islam because it is performed using the word of God – through recitation of the Qur'an – many note the practice can lead to abuse, particularly of those with mental health issues.

Algerians took to social media in fury over the death of the girl in a "torture session" at the hands of an "executioner," with many also decrying a lack of media coverage of the tragedy.

"Are we going to pretend for a long time not to see... the 10-year-old girl tortured and killed...?" asked journalist Akram Kharief, the director of the MENA Defense website, on his Facebook page.



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Thousands hit streets of Algiers on protest movement anniversary
Algeria recalls France envoy after protest films, rejects journalist's bail plea

[Egypt's El-Sisi: Foreign interference in Libya threatens stability in region](#)

Sat, 2020-05-30 19:48

LONDON: Foreign interference in Libya threatens stability and security in the north Africa region, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi said on Saturday.

Putting an end to illegal foreign interventions in Libya and the chaos caused by criminal groups and terrorist militias is necessary, El-Sisi said during a telephone call with French President Emmanuel Macron.

Both presidents agreed that they were keen to see a political solution reached in Libya that would pave the way for a return of security and stability in the country.

They added that this could be achieved through implementing the outcomes of the Berlin process and supporting the efforts of the UN to achieve peace in Libya.



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Russian jets deployment in Libya sparks fears of Ankara-Moscow clash
Human traffickers kill 26 Bangladeshis in Libya

[Top Iran body denies negligence in teenage girl's killing](#)

Author:

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Sat, 2020-05-30 15:31

TEHRAN: Iran's Guardian Council denied Saturday that the killing of a teenage girl by her father was the result of "negligence" due to a delay in its approval of a new child protection law.

Last week's apparent "honor" killing of Romina Ashrafi, 14, sparked outrage across Iran, with media denouncing "institutionalized violence" in the "patriarchal" Islamic republic.

After her death, Vice President for Women and Family Affairs Masoumeh Ebtekar deplored a delay in the validation by the 12-member Guardian Council of a bill on the protection of children and teenagers.

Ebtekar said the bill was in the "final phase" of approval by the council and urged the top body, which is tasked with ensuring legislation complies with the constitution and Islamic sharia law, to pass it quickly.

The council has previously called three times for changes to the draft law after it was passed by lawmakers, the reformist Ebtekar newspaper wrote on Wednesday.

The daily said it was concerned that another delay would spell the bill's demise, particularly since Iran's new parliament is dominated by conservatives and hard-liners.

"There has been no negligence on the part of the council... concerning the approval of a draft law on the rights of children," Guardian Council spokesman Abbas Ali Kadkhodaei said Saturday.

"And I don't see any link between this bill and the fact that this abominable crime took place," he told a news conference.

According to Iranian media, Romina Ashrafi was killed in her sleep on May 21 by her father, who decapitated her in the family home in Talesh in northern Gilan province.

The reports said she ran away after her father refused her permission to marry a man 15 years older, but was detained and taken home.

The legal age to marry in Iran is 13 for women.

Kadkhodaei said the council had indicated to parliament that it had some "objections" concerning the text of the bill and that lawmakers could have met in an emergency session to further discuss the draft law.

But he added: "One law alone cannot resolve such problems (apparent 'honor' crimes) which have a cultural, social and even economic dimension."

Iranian media reported that after authorities detained the teenager, she told a judge she feared for her life if she was sent home.

But what most outraged public opinion was that the girl's father was likely to face a lenient punishment of just three to 10 years in prison, which could be further reduced, according to the Ebtekar newspaper.



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Iran reports most new cases in nearly two months

[Dubai reopens four beaches, major parks](#)

Thu, 2020-05-28 23:23

DUBAI: Dubai will reopen four major beaches and some parks on Friday as Covid-19 restrictions in the emirate are eased.

The beaches at Jumeriah Beach Residence (JBR), Al-Mamzar, Jumeirah and Umm Suqeim will all be open, Dubai Municipality said. on Twitter.

Major parks and the Dubai Frame, an architectural landmark, will also open to the public from Friday.

Precautionary measures imposed by the municipality are to be strictly followed, it said.

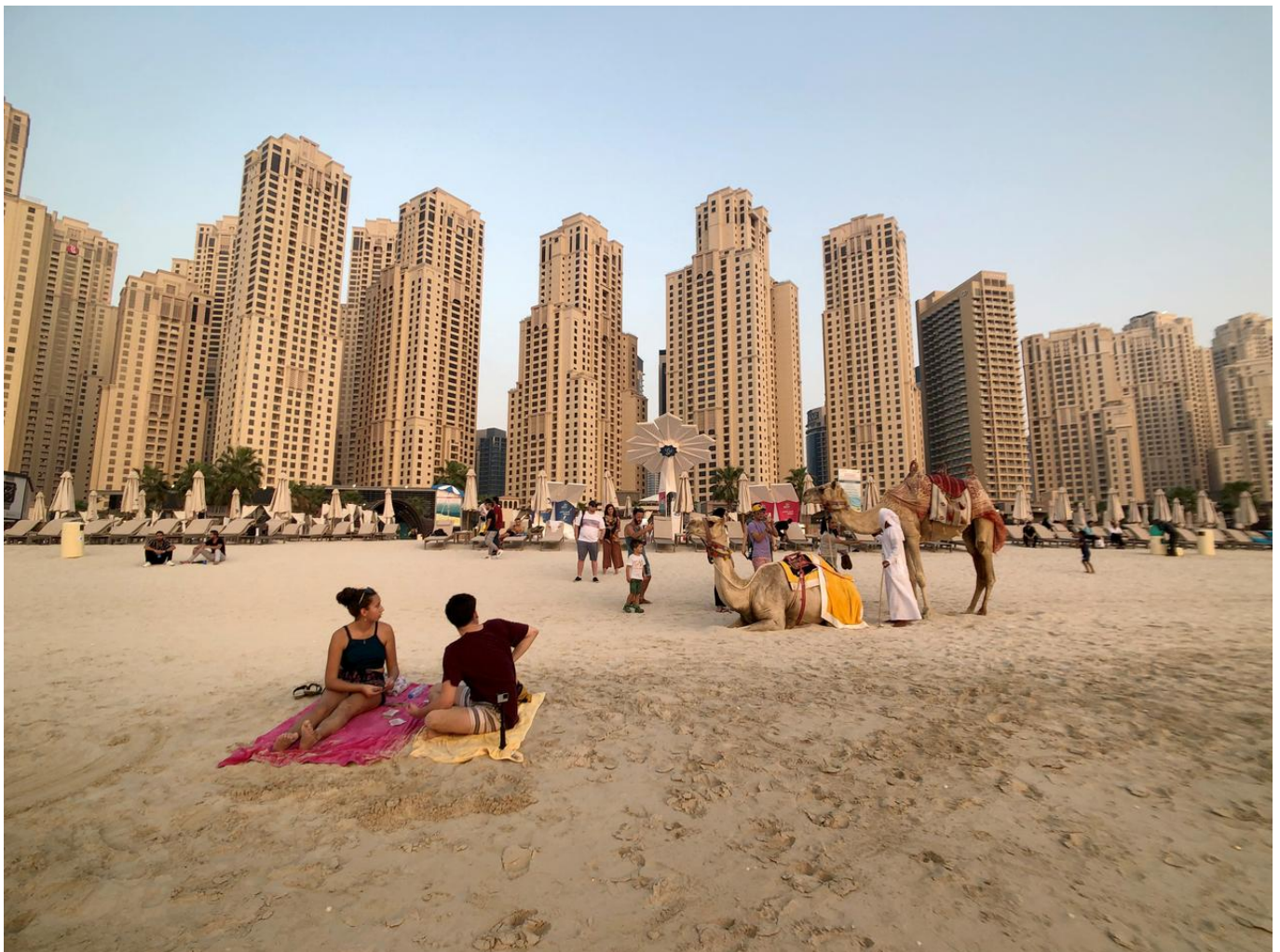
[.@DMunicipality](#) announces the reopening of JBR beach, Al Mamzar, Jumeirah and Umm Suqeim beaches from tomorrow, Friday May 29, and asks all to adhere to the public safety measures and guidelines to

ensure the health & safety of all. [#We_Are_All_Responsible](#)
pic.twitter.com/bgKRHResmf

– Dubai Media Office (@DXBMediaOffice) [May 28, 2020](#)

[.@DMunicipality](#) announces the reopening of major parks and the Dubai Frame to the general public from tomorrow, Friday May 29, and asks all to strictly follow the precautionary measures imposed by the Municipality at these locations for your safety.
pic.twitter.com/pNyzZ0g2dp

– Dubai Media Office (@DXBMediaOffice) [May 28, 2020](#)



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Dubai Municipality reassures residents after swarms of locust spotted, 'situation under control'
Dubai government employees to start returning to work on Sunday

[UN officials appeal for Yemen funding amid pandemic](#)

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Thu, 2020-05-28 19:59

UNITED NATIONS, United States: Top officials from several UN agencies appealed Thursday for urgent international financial support in Yemen with coronavirus spreading in the war-torn country.

"We are increasingly alarmed about the situation in Yemen," officials from the UN Humanitarian Affairs Department, UNICEF, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization said in a joint statement.

"We are running out of time," they said.

The United Nations says COVID-19 has likely already spread throughout most of Yemen, which was already immersed in the world's worst humanitarian crisis because of a war that shows no sign of abating.

The UN officials said they currently have enough "skills, staff and capacity."

"What we don't have is the money. We ask donors to pledge generously and pay pledges promptly," they said, noting that a donors conference has been organized for June 2 by Saudi Arabia and the United Nations.

Mark Lowcock, the under secretary-general for humanitarian affairs, said \$2.4 billion needed to be raised by the end of the year for Yemen, including \$180 million to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Yemen is in desperate need of assistance," Muhannad Hadi of the World Food Programme said, while UNICEF's director, Henriette Fore, warned of a "major disaster."

More than 12 million children in Yemen are in need of humanitarian aid, she said.

Before the pandemic, two million children lacked schools. Another five million have since been forced to quit school, she said.

Officially, 50 people have died from the new coronavirus in Yemen and infections have been reported in 10 of country's 22 governorates.

"But testing and reporting remain limited and it is likely that most areas of the country are already impacted, if not all," the United Nations reports.

Yemen has been engulfed in war since 2014 between Iranian-backed Houthi rebels, who control several regions including the capital Sanaa, and the government backed by an Arab coalition.



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