[Police arrest 26 for smuggling Algerians into Spain](#)

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MADRID: Spanish police on Monday said they had arrested 26 suspected smugglers who brought more than 900 migrants to Spain last year, mostly from Algeria, charging 2,500 euros ($2,800) per person.

The network, which was based in Algeria and the southeastern Spanish provinces of Alicante and Almeria, used powerful speedboats which set out from the northern port of Oran and crossed the western Mediterranean in three hours, a police statement said.

It also ran a route between Tangiers in northern Morocca and the southern Spanish port of Algeciras.

"Each immigrant had to pay the organization between 2,000 and 2,500 euros for the crossing" and another 500 euros to be transported by car to cities in southern and eastern Spain "where they stayed with family and friends," it said.

If they failed to stump up the full payment, they were dumped along the way or held hostage until their families covered the amount owed in a business which earned the network "more than 1.5 million euros" last year, the police said.

The detainees, whose nationality was not given, were mainly rounded up during six raids in Almeria and Alicante during which police also confiscated 17 vehicles.

Spain is one of the main gateways to Europe for migrants coming from Africa, with some 26,168 people arriving by sea in 2019, interior ministry figures show.

But overall, the numbers coming by sea have fallen significantly, down 54.5 percent on 57,498 who made the journey a year earlier.

The figures have fallen since Morocco stepped up its fight against irregular migration in coordination with European and Spanish authorities in a move which has pushed those desperate to reach Europe to seek out other routes, notably via Algeria.

Main category:
[Middle-East](#)
Tags:
[police](#)
[Algeria](#)
[Spain](#)

Lolo Zouai reconnects with Algerian roots in new music video

[Israel says Netanyahu claims 'normalization' with Sudan's leader](#)

Author:
Mon, 2020-02-03 22:13

JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met Sudan's leader Monday to discuss "normalization" between the two states, his office said. Netanyahu met Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, chairman of Sudan's ruling sovereign council, in the Ugandan city of Entebbe, a statement from his office said. aThe countries are technically at war and Sudan could become only the third

Arab state to recognize Israel.

Sudan's sovereign council is a transitional body of military officials and civilians that is currently headed by Burhan, an army general.

It was created as part of a power-sharing agreement between the military and civilians following the overthrow of longtime dictator Omar Al-Bashir last year.

Sudan under Bashir was part of the decades-long Arab boycott of Israel over the Jewish state's treatment of the Palestinians.

In 1967 Arab leaders met in the Sudanese capital Khartoum to announce what was called the 'three noes' – rejecting peace or negotiations with and recognition of Israel.

Since then both Egypt and Jordan have recognized the country, though other Arab and many Muslim countries still do not.

Netanyahu visited the Gulf Arab state Oman in 2018 and he frequently says the boycott of his country is ending, despite no peace deal with the Palestinians.

Netanyahu last visited Uganda in July 2016 to mark the 40th anniversary of a hostage rescue at Entebbe airport, in which his brother Yonatan died.

Main category:
Middle-East
Tags:
Israel
Sudan
Benjamin Netanyahu
Omar Al-Bashir
Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan

[As water scarcity affects millions, a Middle East foundation is making a difference](#)

Mon, 2020-02-03 22:17

DUBAI: Millions of vulnerable families around the world do not drink, cook, or bathe with clean water — a basic resource that is too often taken for granted.

Water is a fundamental human need and a driver for sustainable growth, yet water scarcity affects more than 40 percent of the global population and is projected to rise.

The numbers can be intimidating: Three in 10 people on the planet lack access to safe drinking water; one in four primary schools lack drinking water; and more than 700 children die every day due to poor sanitation and unsafe water.

The second edition of the Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Global Water Award, supervised by the UAE Water Aid Foundation, Suqia, highlighted last month the contributions of individuals, innovators and research centers working to solve this pressing problem.

The efforts of 10 individuals and entities, from eight different countries, in developing "sustainable and innovative solar-energy solutions to the problem of water scarcity" were recognized through the awards in Dubai.

Dr. Mahmoud Shatat, a sustainable energy and water specialist at the University of Nottingham in the UK, won the $40,000 Distinguished Researcher Award in the Innovative Individual category.

His invention promises big reductions in energy consumption. "I couple the technology with solar and renewable energy," he told Arab News.

"Heat pumps are linked to solar and wind energy and, right now, solar is a promising technology. My project is still in the research stage, but I will use this grant to further develop the technology."

Shatat, a Palestinian national, said his technology is designed for "people who live in remote areas or conflict zones" where water can be hard to find.
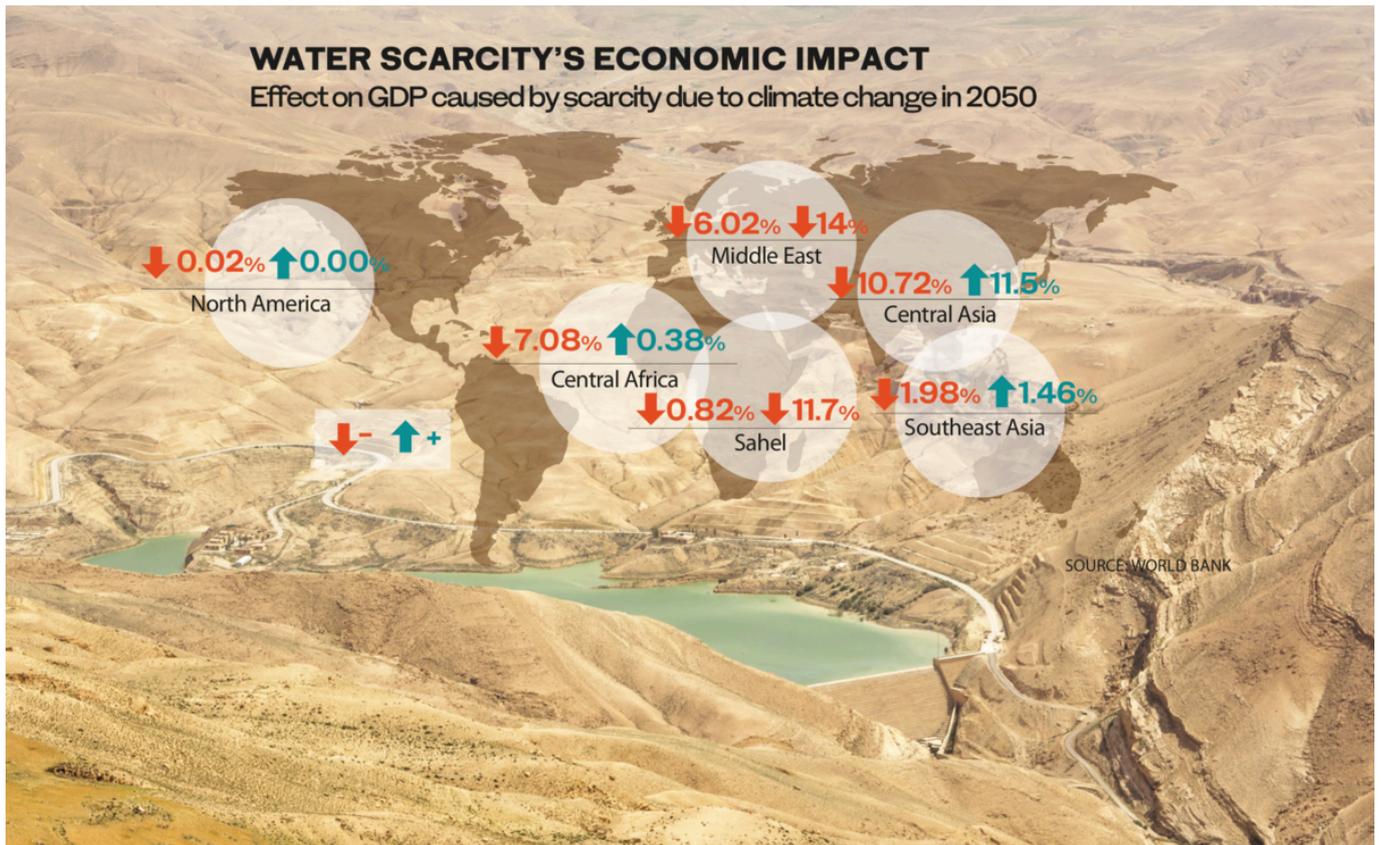
"I developed a solar water-desalination system to convert salty or dirty water into fresh water at a minimal cost that vulnerable people and

communities can afford," he said.

Shatat trains PhD students in water technologies and desalination at Palestine's Al-Azhar University's Water and Environment Institute, when he is not busy advising international agencies working in water desalination.

Among them are GIZ, a Germany-based service provider in international cooperation for sustainable development and education, and the US Agency for International Development.

"I traveled to Yemen to train engineers on solar water desalination, and in Gaza as well," Shatat said. "I trained my lovely people and my community."

WATER SCARCITY'S ECONOMIC IMPACT
Effect on GDP caused by scarcity due to climate change in 2050

North America: ↓0.02% ↑0.00%
Central Africa: ↓7.08% ↑0.38%
Middle East: ↓6.02% ↓14%
Central Asia: ↓10.72% ↑11.5%
Sahel: ↓0.82% ↓11.7%
Southeast Asia: ↓1.98% ↑1.46%
↓ − ↑ +

SOURCE WORLD BANK

Despite there being sufficient supplies of freshwater, millions of people who live in dry-land conditions are forced to live without it.

The majority of those people live in isolated rural areas and spend hours walking to collect and transport water for their families every day.

That water is often unclean and contaminated, leaving people sick with waterborne diseases such as diarrhea, cholera and typhoid.

Not only does walking long distances while carrying 20 liters of water cause severe health issues, but it also keeps children out of school and wastes time that families could be using to earn an income.

Against this backdrop, the Innovative Individual Award in the Youth Category of the Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Global Water Award went to Dr. Muhammad Shahzad of Pakistan and Jan Radel, of Germany.

Radel has specialized in rainwater harvesting in remote locations, which provides safe drinking water for 1,500 children in three schools in Tanzania.

His system purifies water by an ultra-filtration process driven by gravity. "In order to overcome the pressure that we needed to elevate the water into a tower, we used solar-powered electrical pumps," Radel told Arab News.

"It's innovative to have this industrial technology — which normally requires a lot of pressure, chemicals and complex processes — (replaced by) a very low-tech application that doesn't require a lot of energy but delivers the same performance as the industry."

The technology could find a market in countries such as Saudi Arabia, which has been trying to lower the cost of water extraction and increase its utilization of renewable energy.

"We already have the innovations," Radel said. "So what we need now is concepts and using these applications."

Experts say many innovations meet or exceed expectations in the lab or in small pilot studies, but the real test comes in the field.

Suqia says it has so far positively influenced the lives of "over nine million people in 34 countries by providing them with access to clean water" with the help of its implementing partners.

"Humanitarian work has become a daily practice in UAE society," said Saeed Mohammed Al-Tayer, who serves as the chairman of Suqia's board of trustees.

"UAE foreign aid focuses on improving the quality of life of those less fortunate by implementing projects helping nations in need. Water is the cornerstone of economic, social and environmental development."

Al-Tayer notes that boosting the supply of potable water is a vital element of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which aim to ensure the availability of clean water and sanitation.

Also among the 2020 award winners were the UAE's International Business Ventures, in partnership with Zero Mass Water from the US, Germany's Boreal Light GmbH, the UAE's Khalifa University, Ghana's Project Maji, Chile's Plasma Waters and Singapore's Liquinex Group Pte Ltd.

"We were able to eliminate 100 percent of viruses and bacteria in highly polluted water through the transformation of a continuous flow of contaminated water into plasma," said Joaquin Troncoso, head of engineering at Chile's AZ Foundation.

"Through a sharp pressure drop inside the reaction chamber, the water is transformed into biphasic liquid gas stream. The biphasic flow is exposed to an electrical current field that ionizes the water particles, generating a stable plasma state.

"The water elements are then recombined and condensed as potable water

suitable for human consumption."

It took the Plasma Waters team almost nine years to develop the system, said Troncoso.

"Everything we learnt was from the lab," he told Arab News. "It was a great challenge but we're really proud of what we've achieved already.

"We have had a project running for three years in Chile and we recently started a project in Nairobi in Kenya.

"It's very important because the water crisis is a big problem — you can't solve the water crisis without technology and that's our mission."

Main category:
[Middle-East](#)
Tags:
[water scarcity](#)
[Editor's Choice](#)

Startup of the Week: Red Sea Farms in Saudi Arabia aims to provide viable solutions to water scarcityHow the Middle East can tackle the problem of water scarcity

[Egypt steps up preventive measures in hospitals to combat coronavirus threat](#)

Author:
Mon, 2020-02-03 21:50

CAIRO: The Egyptian Ministry of Health has stepped up preventive measures in hospitals throughout the country to combat the threat of any outbreak of the deadly Chinese coronavirus which has spread to more than 24 countries.

The ministry's preventive medicine sector has called on hospitals to investigate all patients admitted into emergency units with flu-like symptoms such as sneezing, coughing and fever.

The steps are part of Egypt's precautionary measures to protect the country from the coronavirus which has so far killed more than 360 people, mostly in China where there are at least 17,000 confirmed cases.

Outside China, there have been at least 150 confirmed cases of the virus — which causes severe acute respiratory infection — and one death, in the Philippines.

Egyptian health officials added that the country's free therapy and medical license sector was also intensifying measures to fight viruses, including the coronavirus, in private hospitals and clinics.

The moves came as 345 Egyptians from the Chinese city of Wuhan, where the coronavirus outbreak started, were flown back to Egypt on Monday.

The ministry said it was carefully monitoring the situation but confirmed there had been no reported cases of coronavirus in Egypt thanks to strict checks in place at airports and seaports, especially on travelers from China.

Ayman Emam, the ministry's director general of quarantine, said that airports and seaports had been provided with health-monitoring cards which allowed access to information on passengers arriving from abroad which could be recorded on the ministry's database. The cards also offered the possibility of monitoring people for 14 days, the incubation period of the virus.

Emam noted that the quarantine procedures were in constant operation to prevent any epidemic from spreading. Masks and gloves had also been provided for airport staff to prevent the transmission of infections.

He added that the ministry had specialized medical equipment to screen all visitors from Wuhan, and that hospitals in all of Egypt's 14 governorates had been designated to treat people suffering from infectious diseases.

The Egyptian health ministry was coordinating with all airlines to protect passengers "anytime, anywhere," and he pointed out that a series of seminars had been held to raise awareness on preventive measures for viruses and infectious diseases.

A total of 345 Egyptians living in Wuhan returned to Cairo on Monday. Medical crews were on board the plane to accompany the passengers and their families. The team wore protective suits and face masks and provided sanitizers and face masks to the Egyptian passengers before they boarded the plane. They will be held in quarantine for 14 days.

Marwan El-Fiqi, an Egyptian resident of Wuhan, thanked the Egyptian authorities for their quick response in bringing people back to Egypt.

El-Fiqi, a professor of communicable diseases at Benha University's school of veterinary medicine, said that in China they had to buy masks as ordered by the Chinese authorities. They also sanitized their clothes, shoes and luggage. "We sanitized our belongings before boarding the plane. The process was repeated at the airport and the evacuation was timely."

Egypt sent 10 tons of medical equipment to China as a gift to the Chinese people on board the plane that transferred the Egyptians living in Wuhan back to Cairo. Egyptian Minister of Health Hala Zayed said the aid included preventive equipment such as face masks and alcoholic sanitizers.

Main category:
Middle-East
Tags:
China Coronavirus
Egypt

Saudi students evacuated from coronavirus-hit Chinese city placed in quarantine

['Open an embassy in Jerusalem,' Netanyahu tells Uganda](#)

Author:
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ENTEBBE, Uganda: Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday 'held talks with Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni and called for the opening of missions in each others' countries, during a visit aimed at boosting ties.
Netanyahu last visited Uganda in July 2016 to mark the 40th anniversary of a hostage rescue at Entebbe airport, in which his brother Yonatan died.
"There are two things we very much want to achieve… one is direct flights from Israel to Uganda," Netanyahu told Museveni at a joint press conference.
"And second… you open an embassy in Jerusalem, I'll open an embassy in Kampala," he added.
"We are studying that," Museveni replied.
Traditionally, most diplomatic missions in Israel have been in Tel Aviv as countries maintained a neutral stance over the status of Jerusalem.
But US President Donald Trump shocked the world in December 2017 by recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital and shifting the US embassy from Tel-Aviv to that city.
In recent years, Israel has boosted its links with African nations, improving ties following a difficult period when many post-independence African leaders sided with Israel's Arab rivals, and viewed Israel's support for apartheid South Africa with intense suspicion.
Israel now has diplomatic relations with 39 of 47 sub-Saharan African states.
Netanyahu is on his fifth visit to Africa in less than four years. The continent is a lucrative market for defense equipment and the agriculture sector.
As Israeli expertise in military and agricultural technology has developed, the opportunity for trade with Africa has grown.

Main category:
[Middle-East](#)
Tags:
[Uganda](#)
[Israel](#)
[Benjamin Netanyahu](#)
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Crowded African skies get even busier with Uganda Air's returnBrazil opens Jerusalem trade center as step to embassy shift