

# US honors head of France's Arab World Institute

Author:

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WASHINGTON: Dr. Jack Lang, president of the Institut du Monde Arabe (Arab World Institute) in Paris, on Monday received the inaugural Global Cultural Leadership Award from the National Council on US-Arab Relations.

The honor was recognition for his achievements in expanding knowledge of the Arab region and promoting cross-cultural understanding. It was presented to him at the French ambassador's residence in Washington by the council's Founding President and CEO Dr. John Duke Anthony, board Chairman John Pratt, International Advisory Board member Leo A. Daly III, and Executive Vice President Patrick Mancino.

Lang and a delegation from the institute were in Washington for the opening of the IMA exhibition "Age Old Cities: A Virtual Journey from Palmyra to Mosul" at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art.

"What Monsieur Lang and the IMA have achieved in highlighting the rich history and culture of the Arab region is considerable," said Anthony during the award presentation ceremony. "They have done much to showcase Arab contributions to knowledge and understanding that have benefited the world's civilizations and humankind in general.

"Under Monsieur Lang's leadership, the IMA has effectively pushed into new territories in storytelling and technology that help further illuminate the innumerable, extraordinary and myriad impacts that Arabs have had on humanity's endless quest for modernization and development."

Lang was appointed IMA president by French President Francois Hollande in 2013. He was previously a National Assembly member for more than two decades, including stints as France's minister of culture and minister of education. He was also mayor of the city of Blois from 1989 to 2000, and served as a special adviser to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon.

The IMA, which is located on the banks of the Seine in Paris, opened in 1987 as a center dedicated to the promotion of Arab civilization, knowledge and art. It contains unique collections and hosts special touring exhibitions. These include "AlUla: Wonder of Arabia," showcasing Saudi Arabia's Nabataean archaeological treasure, the dates for which were recently extended after it proved to be incredibly popular.

The National Council on US-Arab Relations was founded in 1983 as a nonprofit, nongovernmental, educational organization. It is dedicated to raising awareness and appreciation of the extraordinary benefits the United States has derived from its special relationships with countries in the Arab region, and vice versa. Anthony and the council are working on plans for an Arab

Cultural Institute, similar to the IMA, in Washington.



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[Jack Lang](#)

[Institut du Monde Arabe \(Arab World Institute\)](#)

'Everywhere in Saudi Arabia, you see a cultural revolution:' Ex-French

## [Arab coalition and WHO set up air bridge to evacuate sick Yemenis](#)

Author:

Tue, 2020-01-28 00:27

RIYADH: The Arab coalition and World Health Organization are to establish an air bridge to evacuate sick and injured Yemenis.

Patients will be transferred to Egypt and Jordan to receive treatment, coalition spokesman Col Turki Al-Maliki said on Monday.

The operation named “Flights of Mercy” is “in line with the coalition’s humanitarian efforts to support the brotherly people of Yemen, to ease the struggle of those sick and patients with incurable diseases,” he said.



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UK supports Arab Coalition efforts in Yemen, British envoy says  
Missile attack on Yemen MP home kills two including child

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## Turkish earthquake triggers many unanswered questions

Tue, 2020-01-28 00:10

JEDDAH: Rescue operations continue amidst mountains of debris in eastern Turkey, following the deadly earthquake that hit the region on Friday with a magnitude of 6.8.

The quake, which followed two others in the western city of Manisa and the capital Ankara, has killed 33 people so far in Elazig province, and four in the neighboring Malatya province, with over 1,600 injured.

The country remains poised for further trouble, with a large quake in or around Istanbul feared possible in the coming days. "We're expecting a 7.5-magnitude earthquake in Istanbul," Turkey's Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu warned in a live broadcast.

Turkey, which has a history of powerful earthquakes, faced a 7.6 magnitude quake in August 1999 in the western city of Izmit, which killed over 17,000 people, while another in 2011 in eastern city of Van killed more than 500. However, not all lessons have been learned. Now, as then, authorities have been quick to criticize people who have questioned spending of funds raised by special earthquake taxes, meant to make vulnerable areas more resistant. Turkish prosecutors were quick to launch an investigation against Turkish actress Berna Lacin, after she shared her views on earthquake taxes on social media platform Twitter, asking: "Where are they spending all the quake taxes that have been collected so far?"

About 63 billion lira (\$10.598 billion) was collected in special taxes following the 1999 earthquake, which became a permanent tax in 2004.

Turkish politician Mahmut Tanal criticized the lack of transparency over the collection and allocation of funds, saying: "The taxes are not used as promised, but they are still being collected although humanitarian assistance ... is not conducted anymore."

He suggested that funds meant for earthquake relief and damage mitigation were being channeled toward other government budgets.

Burak Bilgehan Ozpek, a political scientist at TOBB University in Ankara, was also critical of the use of earthquake funds.

**NUMBER**

**33 – people killed so far by the earthquake that rocked Elazig province and four in the neighboring Malatya province, with over 1,600 injured.**

“Elazig’s reconstruction ... has not been planned well by the municipality, and the result has been a disorganized city. That is the real danger. The fight against earthquakes should start first by the construction policies of municipalities,” he said.

Award-winning scientist Naci Gorur criticized Turkey’s lack of policies concerning preparation for potential earthquakes.

Gorur, who has conducted extensive research on fault lines in the country, had alerted authorities of the possibility of an earthquake in Elazig, where he is from, three months before the Jan. 24 quake struck.

Meanwhile, the natural disaster has served as a point of contention in ongoing political hostilities between the Turkish government and separatist Kurdish factions.

The pro-Kurdish People’s Democratic Party, claiming it had attempted to send aid to the region to assist beleaguered residents, released an official statement on Sunday, saying: “Delivery of two aid trucks ... for Elazig earthquake victims has been obstructed by the Interior Ministry.

“There can be no explanation for blocking humanitarian aid to people in need. We call on the government to stop such practices at once.”

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, meanwhile, visited Malatya in the aftermath of the earthquake on Saturday.



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Turkey probes dozens over quake social media posts Turkish rescue teams hunt

## Yemen's Marib province safe from Houthis, says governor

Tue, 2020-01-28 00:05

AL-MUKALLA, YEMEN: The central Yemeni province of Marib is safe from Houthi attacks, its governor told media on Sunday, amid reports that the Iranian-backed militia was making territorial gains in a neighboring district. "We will never allow Houthis to pollute Marib," Major Sultan Al-Aradah said, adding that thousands of tribesmen and troops were ready to resist Houthi approaches to the province's borders.

He told reporters that Marib had become a safe haven for thousands of internally displaced people who had fled a Houthi crackdown in Sanaa and other rebel-held areas.

"Marib will remain committed to its political leadership, the government, the (Saudi-led) coalition and the people. It will be protected by its honorable men (who come) from the army, security services and the Yemenis who live here," the governor said, welcoming the coalition's support.

Marib has hosted thousands of Yemeni army troops and others from the Saudi-led coalition, in addition to thousands of people who have fled their homes in Houthi-controlled territories.

The province's military bases have been used by the army and the coalition for training and arming thousands of soldiers who are battling Houthis in Nehim, Marib's Serwah, Baydha and Taiz.

An escalation of fighting in Nehim, Sanaa, has forced dozens of displaced people into fleeing their camps outside Marib city and heading to Hadramout. Residents in Hadramout's Aber district told Arab News that families had started arriving.

State media said on Monday that Saudi-led coalition warplanes had carried out intense airstrikes targeting Houthi locations in Nehim and Jawf.

### **BACKGROUND**

**Houthis have focused attacks on the western side of Taiz in an attempt to seize control of an important road that links the city with the southern port city of Aden.**

A Houthi leader, Abu Abdul Aziz, and a number of militants were killed on Sunday as government forces engaged in heavy fighting on the western and eastern edges of the southern city of Taiz.

Local army officers said the government's escalation of fighting was aimed at easing the pressure on loyalists on Nehim's battlegrounds.

“The battlefields are connected. What happens here in Taiz will definitely affect the other battlefields,” Abdul Basit Al-Baher, a Yemeni army spokesman in Taiz, told Arab News. “Fighting has not ceased since yesterday afternoon,” he said, adding that the dead Houthi leader was thought to be the second or third most important rebel military commander in Taiz.

A mortar shell fired by Houthis landed at a local market on the city’s western outskirts, killing three civilians and injuring several others.

“They have fired at least 13 mortars and Katyusha rockets at residential areas in Taiz over the last several hours,” Al-Baher said on Monday.

Houthis have focused their attacks on the western side of Taiz in an attempt to seize control of an important road that links the city with the southern port city of Aden.



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Donald Trump to unveil Middle East peace plan that ‘makes sense for everybody’

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[\*\*Iraqi PM promises to boost protection\*\*](#)

## for US embassy

Author:

Reuters

ID:

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BAGHDAD: The Iraqi prime minister has promised to strengthen security for the US embassy in Baghdad after one person was injured in the latest missile attack on the compound.

Adel Abdul Mahdi stressed, in a phone call with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Monday, the importance of respecting Iraq's sovereignty by everyone.

He also said there was a need to de-escalate tensions in the region, according to a statement from his office.

Gen. Frank McKenzie, a top US commander for the Middle East, said on Monday mortars were used in the attack on the embassy that injured one person and caused some material damage the previous night, not katyusha rockets as was initially reported by staffers and a statement from the military.

The mortar attack started a fire that was put out. He said no US military members were injured, but that one US national received a minor injury but has returned to work.

The US embassy is within the Iraqi capital's Green Zone, and has been a flashpoint amid wider regional tensions between the US and Iran, which have played out inside Iraq in recent weeks. Iraqi supporters of an Iran-backed militia stormed the embassy compound on Dec. 31, smashing the main door and setting fire to the reception area.

An initial military statement said at least five katyusha rockets had landed inside the Green Zone late Sunday. It was the third attack targeting the US embassy this month, and the perpetrators were not immediately known.

Perpetrators had used katyusha rockets in previous attacks and caused no injuries.

There was no claim of responsibility for any of the attacks. But the US has accused Iran-backed militias of targeting US interests by attacking military bases housing Americans and diplomatic missions.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo urged Iraqi Prime Minister Adil Abdel Mahdi to uphold his country's "sovereignty" in the face of "attacks" from Iran on US facilities in Iraq.

Pompeo "expressed his outrage at the continued assaults by Iran's armed groups against US facilities in Iraq, including yesterday's rocket attacks against our Embassy, which resulted in one injury," the State Department said in a statement.

The statement said that "these attacks demonstrate a wanton disregard for Iraqi sovereignty and a failure to rein in these dangerous armed groups."

Pompeo said on Twitter that "the government of #Iraq must take immediate steps to protect our diplomatic facilities as required by international law."

\* With AP/AFP



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Three rockets hit US embassy in Baghdad  
Two rockets hit near US embassy in Baghdad