

# Right-wing alliance, Arab bloc formed ahead of Israeli vote

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JERUSALEM: A group of religious nationalist parties in Israel announced Monday that they would run together in the upcoming parliamentary elections, the same day four Arab political parties formalized a merger of their own. The United Right, headed by former Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked, is the third political alliance formed in recent days ahead of this week's deadline to finalize party lineups for the September 17 vote. It is expected to back Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu should he be tasked with forming a government, potentially helping him to secure a fourth consecutive term in office.

Israel faces an unprecedented repeat election in September after Netanyahu failed to form a majority coalition government following a vote in April. Last week, former Prime Minister Ehud Barak and the left-wing Meretz party joined to form the Democratic Union. They hope to oust Netanyahu, who became Israel's longest-serving prime minister earlier this month.

Shaked, who assumed the leadership of her New Right party last week, will also head the newly formed United Right, a constellation of religious nationalist parties.

"Weeks of efforts bore fruit today. We united right wing parties for a joint run," Shaked wrote on Twitter. Her New Right party failed to garner sufficient votes to enter the Knesset, Israel's parliament, in April's elections.

The right-wing bloc was announced a day after the Palestinian nationalist Balad party said it would join a reunited Joint List of Arab parties, months after infighting fragmented the political alliance, in order to "increase Arab representation in parliament."

Ayman Odeh, head of the Hadash party, said Monday that now that the parties have reunited, they can address the "great challenge" facing the country's Arab minority.

Israel's Arab population mainly consists of Palestinians who remained in Israel after its creation in 1948 and their descendants, and makes up around a fifth of Israel's population. They largely identify with the Palestinians and have long complained of discrimination.

Polls published last week projected that the Joint List could become the third largest party in the Knesset, Israel's parliament, after the September elections.

The four factions first united in 2015, earning 13 seats in the 120-seat Knesset. But infighting later split the Joint List into two parties, which only won a combined 10 seats amid low Arab turnout in April's election. Around 49% of Arabs cast ballots, down from 64% in the 2015 election.



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## [UN calls for Eid truce in Libya, warns foreign support fueling conflict](#)

Author:

Mon, 2019-07-29 20:09

UNITED NATIONS: A United Nations envoy called on Monday for a truce to be declared in Libya around Aug. 10, and warned that an influx of weapons from foreign supporters in violation of an arms embargo was fueling the conflict. The truce should be declared to mark the Muslim Eid Al-Adha holiday, UN Libya envoy Ghassan Salame told the Security Council, and be accompanied by confidence-building moves like an exchange of prisoners and remains and release of those arbitrarily detained.

Libya has been riven by violence since the fall of Muammar Qaddafi in 2011. "In the course of the current fighting, serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law by all parties have been committed," Salame told the 15-member Security Council.

"More than ever, Libyans are now fighting the wars of other countries who appear content to fight to the last Libyan and to see the country entirely destroyed in order to settle their own scores," he said.

"Armed drones, armored vehicles and pickup trucks fitted with heavy armaments, machine guns, recoilless rifles, mortar and rocket launchers, have been recently transferred to Libya with the complicity and indeed outright support of foreign governments," Salame said.

Following a truce, Salame proposed a high-level meeting of concerned countries be convened to "cement the cessation of hostilities, work together to enforce the strict implementation of the arms embargo to prevent the further flow of weapons to the Libyan theater; and promote strict adherence to international humanitarian and human rights law by Libyan parties."

He said this should then be followed by a meeting of leading and influential Libyans to agree on a way forward out of the conflict.

"This triple action will require consensus in this council and among the member states who exert influence on the ground," Salame said.

In a statement earlier this month, the UN Security Council called for the warring parties to commit to a cease-fire and urged other countries not to intervene or exacerbate the conflict.

Britain's UN Ambassador Karen Pierce said the council would discuss Salame's proposals to work out how best the body could support the United Nations.

The Security Council has struggled to unify on how to deal with the renewed violence.



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Airstrike on Libyan hospital leaves 5 dead, say officials  
Libya militia says arrests Al-Qaeda leaders

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## Turkish students given text books justifying 9/11 attacks, slamming 'weak' EU – mirroring Erdogan views

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Sun, 2019-07-28 22:51

LONDON: A modern history text book for Turkish public school students appears to justify the Sept. 11 attacks in the US by Al-Qaeda and labels the European Union a "Christian club", according to a report in Nordic Monitor.

The article from NM, a group that covers religious, ideological and ethnic extremist movements and radical groups, also shows that the text-book – which mirrors speeches by Turkey's president Recept Tayyip Erdogan – contains text criticizing the NATO alliance.

The book, used by twelfth-grade students in public schools in Turkey, says among its pages: "The US, which has more say with the self-confidence it gained in the aftermath of the Cold War but complies less with international agreements, has started to see itself as one above equals in international relations.

"From that point forward, deciding which countries would be punished and what systems would be changed relied on definitions and references made by the US. These practices by the US are one of the reasons behind the Al-Qaeda terrorist organization's attack on 9/11."

According to the text book, the US became "the main source of problems in the world with what it did in the aftermath of September 11," and is seeking to secure the "absolute dominance" of the international system.

The book also takes aim at the Pope and the European Union for denying Turkey's membership of the bloc – slamming the "denial of membership to Turkey, a predominantly Muslim nation, while accepting (other) democratically and economically weak states," which it said raised questions about the identity of the EU.

Within the same section, the book features a photo of EU leaders and the Pope in 2017 as they gathered in Rome to mark the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, with a caption from British-Polish historian Norman Davies: "I am talking about the common tradition of Christianity, which has made Europe



what it is.”

Erdogan referenced the photo during his 2017 presidential referendum rallies and said it proved western Europe was “hostile to Islam.”

The book’s criticism of NATO stretches to the group’s multilateral foreign policy, which it claims has destroyed Turkey’s defense industry and has made Turkey “dependent on US military aid.”

Critics of the text book say school children in Turkey are being force-fed the rhetoric spread by Erdogan and his party at a young age.



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Warning to Turkish artists as singer is jailed for ‘insulting’ Erdogan  
Turkish leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan faces new threat from former allies

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## Oman not mediating, but in contact with 'all parties' over navigation in Hormuz

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TEHRAN: Oman is not undertaking any mediation efforts around rising tensions in the Gulf region but is in contact with "all parties" in order to maintain stability in the Strait of Hormuz, Oman's minister in charge of foreign affairs said on Sunday.

"We are not mediating, but what we are more concerned with, in this case, is securing the stability of navigation in the Hormuz Strait, so we are in contact with all parties," Yousuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah told Omani state TV after meeting Iranian officials in Tehran.

The emergency meeting with parties to Iran's 2015 nuclear deal was constructive but there are unresolved issues and Tehran will continue to reduce its nuclear commitments if Europeans fail to salvage the pact, Iranian official Abbas Araqchi said on Sunday.

The parties have been trying to salvage the pact since the US withdrew from it in May 2018 and re-imposed sanctions on Iran.

The Europeans say further breaches of the agreement by Iran would escalate confrontation at a time when Tehran and Washington are at risk of a miscalculation that could lead to war.

The seizure of the British tanker in the world's most important waterway for the oil trade has deepened a crisis between Iran and the West. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said Britain's seizure of the Iranian oil tanker was illegal and would be detrimental for Britain.



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Oman's top diplomat in Iran talks amid mounting Gulf tensions  
Oman urges Iran to let seized tanker depart

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## [Iran nuclear deal parties meet after month of friction](#)

Author:

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VIENNA: Parties to Iran's 2015 nuclear deal met in Vienna on Sunday for emergency talks called in response to an escalation in tensions between Iran and the West that included confrontations at sea and Tehran's breaches of the accord.

Britain, France, Germany, Russia, China and Iran have been trying to salvage the pact since the United States withdrew from it in May 2018 and re-imposed and toughened sanctions on Iran, crippling an already weak economy. The European-led efforts to protect trade with Iran against the US sanctions have yielded nothing concrete so far. Earlier this month, Tehran followed through on its threat to increase its nuclear activities in breach of the agreement.

"All our steps taken so far are reversible if other parties to the deal fulfil their commitments," an Iranian diplomat told Reuters before the extraordinary meeting was due to start.

**\*\*\*Read more: [Iran says European naval mission in Gulf would be 'provocative'](#)\*\*\***

In response to the sanctions, Iran said in May it would decrease its commitments under the nuclear pact. Under the deal, most international sanctions against Tehran were lifted in return for limitations on its nuclear work.

So far, Iran has breached the limit of its enriched uranium stockpile as well as enriching uranium beyond a 3.67% purity limit set by its deal with major powers, defying a warning by Europeans to stick to the deal despite US sanctions.

The UN nuclear watchdog, policing the deal, has confirmed the measures announced by Tehran.

"(Trade vehicle) INSTEX , along with other measures, will be discussed in the meeting. Other parties should accelerate their efforts, otherwise Iran will take a third step," the diplomat said.

### **Sanctions**

The meeting in Vienna comes after Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards seized a British-flagged oil tanker on July 19, two weeks after British forces captured an Iranian oil tanker near Gibraltar which it said was violating sanctions on Syria.

Iran's senior nuclear negotiator Abbas Araqchi said on Sunday Britain's seizure of the Iranian oil tanker was a violation of the nuclear pact.

"We witnessed the seizure of an oil tanker carrying Iranian oil in the Strait of Gibraltar which in our view is a violation of (the nuclear deal)," Araqchi said.

"And the countries who are part of (the nuclear deal) shouldn't create obstacles for the export of Iranian oil."

Britain has called for a European-led naval mission to ensure safe shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, a vital international oil shipping route. An Iranian government spokesman said on Sunday such a mission would send a "hostile message."

Britain said on Sunday Royal Navy destroyer HMS Duncan had arrived in the Gulf to join a British frigate escorting British-flagged ships through the Strait.

Iran has threatened to disrupt oil shipments through the waterway, where several oil tankers have been attacked, if the United States tries to strangle its economy with sanctions on its vital oil exports.





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Iranian exiles rally in London to demand regime change in TehranIran says European naval mission in Gulf would be 'provocative'