

Sudan's top opposition rejects strike call in protest rift

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Sun, 2019-05-26 11:38

KHARTOUM: Sudan's main opposition group and supporter of the protest movement on Sunday rejected its call to stage a two-day general strike, in the first sign of a rift within the movement negotiating the launch of civilian rule. Talks between leaders of the umbrella protest movement, the Alliance for Freedom and Change, and army generals who seized power after ousting autocrat Omar Al-Bashir last month are deadlocked over who should lead a new governing body – a civilian or soldier.

In a bid to step up pressure on the generals, the protest movement has called for a general strike starting Tuesday, but the National Umma Party, a key backer of the movement, rejected the measure.

"We reject the general strike announced by some opposition groups" in the Alliance for Freedom and Change, the National Umma Party said in a statement. "A general strike is a weapon that should be used after it is agreed upon by everybody," Umma said.

"We have to avoid such escalated measures that are not fully agreed."

The National Umma Party led by former premier Sadiq Al-Mahdi said any such decision should be taken by a council of leaders of the protest movement. Such a council was still not in place and "will be composed in a meeting on Monday", it said.

It was Mahdi's elected government that Bashir, who himself was deposed on April 11, toppled in a coup in 1989.

In a recent interview with AFP, Mahdi warned protesters not to "provoke" the army's rulers as they had been instrumental in ousting Bashir.



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Sudan interim military council chief Al-Burhan meets with Egypt's President El-Sisi
Sudanese protesters call for strike amid divisions with army

[Syrian troops regain control of village they lost to rebels](#)

Author:

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Sun, 2019-05-26 10:17

DAMASCUS: Syrian state media say government forces have regained control of a northwestern village, just days after losing it to militants.

State TV says troops captured Kfar Nabudah on Sunday from militants, including members of Al-Qaeda-linked Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham group.

Government forces first captured Kfar Nabudah on May 8, then lost it on

Wednesday. The village is located on the southwestern edge of Idlib, the last major rebel stronghold in the country.

The opposition's Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights says Syrian government forces carried out scores of airstrikes, and used barrels bombs and artillery shells to retake the village.

The latest round of violence erupted late last month, wrecking a cease-fire brokered for the area by Russia and Turkey and raising fears of a wider government offensive.



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Turkey sends weapons to opposition fighters in Syria
Syrian journalist claims torture, humiliation at hands of Turkish forces while crossing border

[Three French Daesh members sentenced to death in Iraq](#)

Sun, 2019-05-26 13:59

BAGHDAD: An Iraqi court on Sunday sentenced three French citizens to death after they were found guilty of joining Daesh, a court official said. Captured in Syria by a US-backed force fighting the extremists, Kevin Gonot, Leonard Lopez and Salim Machou are the first French Daesh members to receive death sentences in Iraq, where they were transferred for trial. They have 30 days to appeal.

Iraq has taken custody of thousands of extremists repatriated in recent months from neighbouring Syria, where they were caught by the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces during the battle to destroy Daesh's "caliphate". Iraqi courts have placed on trial hundreds of foreigners, condemning many to life in prison and others to death, although no foreign Daesh members have yet been executed.

Those sentenced on Sunday were among 12 French citizens who were caught in Syria and transferred to Iraqi custody in February.

Rights groups including Human Rights Watch have criticised Iraq's anti-terror trials, which they say often rely on circumstantial evidence or confessions obtained under torture.

Analysts have also warned that prisons in Iraq have in the past acted as "academies" for future extremists, including Daesh supremo Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi.



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Daesh revival in Iraq must be prevented, says UN envoy
Daesh militants riot in Tajik prison, 32 killed

[Palestinian chief negotiator urges Arabs to reconsider attending Bahrain workshop](#)

Author:

Sun, 2019-05-26 00:44

AMMAN: The secretary of the PLO's executive committee, Saeb Erekat, called on Arab states that have committed to attend the Bahrain economic "workshop" to revisit their decision.

In an interview with Arab News, Erekat praised Saudi Arabia's commitment to the cause of Palestine. "In every important decision, Saudi Arabia stood with the people of Palestine," Erekat said.

The chief Palestinian negotiator noted that all Arabs have made a commitment that they will accept whatever Palestinians accept. "We call on the countries that have agreed to attend the Bahrain workshop to reevaluate their decision," he said.

Erekat noted that Saudi Arabia has been the most diligent country in supporting the Palestinian government. "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia doesn't miss its monthly support to the Palestinian government. Saudi Arabia doesn't need an economic conference to financially support Palestinians," he told Arab news.

Erekat spoke forcefully on this issue in an exclusive interview on the Saudi-owned Al Arabiya satellite TV.

The Palestinian position is that the US-backed economic workshop is aimed at circumventing Palestinian national aspirations. "We started with land for peace and now we are talking about prosperity for peace," Erekat was quoted as saying by various Qatari owned media outlets.

Despite this, Qatar is confirmed to attend the Bahrain conference according to exclusive information obtained by Israeli newspaper, Haaretz.

The US-Bahraini economic workshop is scheduled in Manama, Bahrain June 25 and 26.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar have publicly declared that they will attend, along with the Bahraini hosts. Finance ministers from Arab and foreign countries have been invited. Palestinian officials and leading Palestinian business have said they will not attend.

The Trump peace team, headed by the president's son-in-law Jared Kushner and chief Middle East advisor Jason Greenblatt, were expected to announce their joint political and economic plans after the holy month of Ramadan but the plan was replaced by an economic workshop in Bahrain.



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Bahrain says conference co-hosted with US aimed at helping
PalestiniansPalestinians cold-shouldered from major US-Bahraini economic
'peace' workshop

Syrian journalist claims torture, humiliation at hands of Turkish forces while crossing border

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Sat, 2019-05-25 23:26

LONDON: A Syrian journalist has claimed on his YouTube channel that he has been assaulted and beaten by Turkish forces on the Syria-Turkey border. Mazen Al-Shami posted a video to the social media network and also posted on Facebook, saying: "After nine years of the revolution, that is how my family and I are treated.

"A Turkish officer tortured me in front of my family and tortured my children on the Syria-Turkey border, it was his reaction when he found out I was a Syrian journalist."



Mazen Al-Shami was visibly distraught in the video. (Screenshot/YouTube)

Al-Shami ended the post with the hashtags #Thank_You_Turkey and #Thank_You_Hotel_Opposition with a number of photos containing the injuries sustained by him and his son as a result of the assault.

According to Al-Shami in his video, he was arrested with two of his children along with other civilians as they tried to cross the border into Turkey from the Syrian Idlib region.



Al-Shami proceeds to show wounds he says he received at the hands of Turkish forces while trying to cross the Syria-Turkey border. (Screenshot/YouTube)

The Association of Syrian Journalists, which represents journalists opposed to the Bashar Assad regime, quoted Al-Shami as saying: "The opposition did not respond to my request to enter Turkey for a follow-up to my medical treatment."

The association added that Al-Shami was beaten and severely tortured with "metal rods, iron chains and agricultural hand tools."



According to the Association of Syrian Journalists, Al-Shami was tortured with metal rods, iron chains and agricultural hand tools.
(Screenshot/YouTube)

Hundreds of Syrian activists have responded to the incident, saying the officer responsible must be held accountable and that the Turkish army is constantly targeting civilians trying to cross the border from Syria. In a recent report, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights confirmed that 419 Syrian civilians – among them 75 children and 38 women – have been killed trying to cross the border since the start of the country's ongoing conflict.



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Syrian journalist dies of wounds Washington says observation posts in place on Syria-Turkey border