

# El-Sisi's order to paint Egypt's 'uncivilized' buildings puzzles residents

Fri, 2019-01-25 20:40

CAIRO: A decree from Egypt's president to paint all the country's red brick buildings in an effort to make the country more beautiful has been criticised by residents.

President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi has ordered buildings in cities must be painted "dusty colors," while coastal buildings will take on shades of blue, according to the decree.

Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly said the buildings will be colored based on a scheme reflective of the area.

"The plan is to have unified colors for the buildings instead of this uncivilized scene," Madbouly told a cabinet meeting last week.

Provincial leaders have been told how crucial it is to improve the appearance of urban and rural settlements.

According to Madbouly, each governorate will have a certain color scheme.

Governors will be given deadlines and those who don't comply with the decree will be fined.

The decree comes as a part of a move to improve and restore the overall appearance of Egypt's different governorates.

But many Egyptians have questioned whether cosmetic improvements to buildings should be a top priority for a government of a country facing a massive housing crisis.

"Enforcing monetary penalties on people to have more dusty-colored buildings sounds problematic to me," Ahmed Mostafa, a Cairo resident, told Arab News. "Painting buildings will not help solve Egypt's housing problem. There are millions of homeless people who can't even find a red brick building to live in."

The changes already have started in Khedival Cairo are, with painters and workers on-call to paint the buildings.

Red-brick buildings are common in the Egyptian capital, accommodating up to 11 million people – nearly two thirds of the vast city's population.

Urban planning expert David Sims, author of "Understanding Cairo: The Logic of a City Out of Control," said there are an estimated 10 red-brick buildings in Egypt.

last year, the Egyptian government vowed to eliminate slum neighborhoods from Egypt and to put an end to informal housing by the end of 2019. The slum areas house up to 40 percent of the Egyptian population. Approximately 14 billion Egyptian pounds (\$782 million) was allocated to complete the project.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Abdel Fattah El-Sisi](#)

[Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi](#)

Cairo book fair gleaming new site opens far from historic market  
Bill Gates' daughter visits Cairo with Egyptian boyfriend

---

## [Israeli troops kill 2 Palestinians](#)

Fri, 2019-01-25 20:05

GAZA: Israeli troops on Friday fatally shot a Palestinian and wounded another as they threw stones at Israeli motorists in the occupied West Bank, the army said.

Soldiers "responded by firing at the suspects, who received medical treatment. One of the suspects later died of his wounds and another was injured," a statement said.

Residents of the dead youth's village of Silwad, near Ramallah, named him as Ayman Hamed, 17.

Earlier, a Palestinian was shot dead by Israeli fire during fresh clashes along the Gaza border Friday, the health ministry said.

Ehab Abed, 25, was "killed by Israeli occupation fire east of Rafah," in southern Gaza, health ministry spokesman Ashraf Al-Qudra said in a statement.

An AFP journalist at the hospital said he had been shot in the heart.

Thousands of people gathered at multiple sites along the border, with Israeli forces using tear gas and live fire to force protesters back from the border.

Friday's protests were the first since the seeming breakdown of an informal truce agreement between Israel and Gaza's rulers Hamas.

That deal had seen Qatar provide \$15 million in funds monthly to Gaza via Israeli territory.

On Thursday Hamas said it would no longer accept the money, saying Israel was not respecting the agreement.







Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Palestinian](#)

[Israel](#)

[Gaza](#)

[West Bank](#)

Israeli fire wounds 14 as thousands of Palestinians protest at Gaza border  
Gaza teen dies of wounds from Israeli fire during protest

---

## [Turkey 'will go it alone' with Syria security zone](#)

Fri, 2019-01-25 15:22

JEDDAH: Turkey may establish its own 32km security zone in northern Syria to keep Kurdish militias away from its border, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Friday.

The threat by Ankara to “go it alone” with a buffer zone follows silence from Washington on US involvement in the plan.

President Donald Trump proposed the border zone, but has not specified who would create, enforce or pay for it, or where exactly it would be.

“We expect the promise of a security zone, a buffer zone aimed at protecting

our country from terrorists, to be fulfilled in few months," Erdogan said on Friday. "Otherwise we will establish it ourselves.

"Our only expectation from our allies is that they provide logistical support to Turkey's effort. Our patience has a limit. We will not wait for ever for the fulfilment of the promises given to us."

Erdogan said neither the UN nor the international coalition formed to protect the Syrian people were capable of creating a safe zone or maintaining security in the region.

"The only power that can in a true sense establish the safety and functioning of this region on our Syrian border is Turkey," he said. "We are closed to all proposed solutions besides this."

He said Turkey had the right to enter Syrian territory when it was threatened under a 1998 agreement with Damascus after Syria expelled the Kurdish militant leader Abdullah Ocalan, now jailed in Turkey.

Ankara regards the Syrian Kurdish YPG as an extension of Ocalan's Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which has fought a decades-long insurgency in southeast Turkey.

The YPG has played a key role in the US-led coalition against Daesh. Trump had previously warned Ankara not to attack Kurdish fighters in Syria, and threatened retaliation against Turkey's economy.

US special Syria envoy James Jeffrey held talks in Ankara on Friday with Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar and armed forces chief Gen. Yasar Guler. Akar told him Turkey expected the US to end its support for the YPG and complete the road map which the two countries agreed upon for the Syrian town of Manbij to the west of the Euphrates.

Military operations against Daesh in Syria are wrapping up and the last pockets of the self-proclaimed "caliphate" will be flushed out within a month, a top commander said.

"The operation of our forces against Daesh in its last pocket has reached its end and Daesh fighters are now surrounded in one area," said Mazloun Kobani, head of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

With backing from the US-led coalition, the SDF are in the last phase of an operation started on Sept. 10 to defeat the jihadists in their Euphrates Valley bastions in eastern Syria.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Recep Tayyip Erdoğan](#)

[Syria](#)

[Turkey](#)

Turkey court orders release of hunger striking Kurdish MPTurkey says it has capacity to create 'safe zone' in Syria alone

---

## [France tells Iran new sanctions loom if missile talks fail](#)

Author:

Reuters

ID:

1548418249967544100

Fri, 2019-01-25 12:03

PARIS: France is ready to impose further sanctions against Iran if no progress is made in talks over its ballistic missile program, the French foreign minister said on Friday.

"We are ready, if the talks don't yield results, to apply sanctions firmly, and they know it," Jean-Yves Le Drian told reporters.

Diplomats previously told Reuters in private that France, Britain and other EU countries were considering new economic sanctions against Tehran.

Those could include asset freezes and travel bans on Iran's Revolutionary Guards and Iranians developing the Islamic Republic's ballistic missile program, three diplomats said.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Iran](#)

[France](#)

US, UK discuss countering Iran's activities  
US sanctions Iranian militias for turning refugees into 'cannon fodder'

---

## [Iraq priest who saved Christian heritage ordained Mosul archbishop](#)

Author:

AFP

ID:

1548414961827208700

Fri, 2019-01-25 11:05

MOSUL: An Iraqi priest who saved a trove of religious manuscripts from the

Daesh group was ordained on Friday as the new Chaldean Catholic archbishop of Mosul.

Najeeb Michael, 63, was inaugurated in a ceremony in Mosul's St. Paul Church attended by Catholic leaders from the region and the US, as well as local officials and residents.

"Our message to the whole world, and to Mosul's people, is one of coexistence, love, and peace among all of Mosul's different communities and the end of the ideology that Daesh brought here," Michael said.

Michael entered religious life at 24 and spent years serving at Al-Saa Church (Our Lady of the Hour) in Mosul.

There, he managed the preservation of nearly 850 ancient manuscripts in Aramaic, Arabic and other languages, as well as 300-year-old letters and some 50,000 books.

In 2007, he transferred the archives to Qaraqosh, once Iraq's largest Christian city, to protect them during an Islamist insurgency which saw thousands of Christians flee Mosul.

And when Daesh – who was notorious for defacing churches and destroying any artifacts deemed contrary to its neoconservative interpretation of Islam – swept across Iraq in 2014, Michael again took action.

As the militants charged toward Qaraqosh, the Dominican friar filled his car with rare manuscripts, 16th century books and irreplaceable records and fled east to the relative safety of Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region.

With two other friars from his Dominican order, Michael also moved the Oriental Manuscript Digitization Center (OMDC), which scans damaged manuscripts recovered from churches and villages across northern Iraq.

From the Kurdish capital Irbil, he and a team of Christian and Muslim experts digitally copied thousands of Chaldean, Syrian, Armenian and Nestorian manuscripts.

Iraqi forces recaptured Mosul from Daesh in the summer of 2017, and Michael returned to the city months later to attend the first post-Daesh Christmas mass.

He found his church in ruins, with rooms transformed into workshops for bombs and explosive belts and gallows had replaced the church altar.

But he insisted there was reason for hope.

"I'm optimistic. The last word will be one of peace, not the sword," Michael said last year.

On Friday, the head of the Chaldean Catholic Church called for more international support to Iraq's Christians.

"Bishops from outside Iraq are participating in this occasion to support the Christians of Mosul," said Patriarch Louis Raphael Sako.

"They are encouraging them to return to their city, rebuild it alongside the other communities and turn a new page based on trust and peaceful coexistence."



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Mosul](#)

[religion](#)

[Iraq](#)

Mosul celebrates first post-Daesh Christmas For Iraq's Christians, a bittersweet first Christmas home after Daesh