

[Egypt says security forces killed 14 militants in Sinai](#)

Author:

By ASHRAF SWEILAM | AP

ID:

1548018921508976000

Sun, 2019-01-20 (All day)

CAIRO: Egyptian security forces say they've killed 14 militants and seized a ton of explosives in an operation in the restive northern part of the Sinai Peninsula.

They said on Sunday that their offensive involved clashes with Islamic militants in desert areas outside the city of el-Arish, adding that the extremists had intended to plant roadside bombs in areas between there and the cities of Rafah and Sheikh Zuweyid.

Other weapons caches including explosives were found in the more central Sinai Jabal Al-Halal mountain area.

The officials spoke anonymously as they weren't authorized to brief reporters.

The army has been battling extremist insurgents led Daesh militants in north Sinai for years. The area is off limits for journalists, diplomats and other observers so information from there cannot be independently verified.



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Boat with migrants rescued off Libya looks for port to dock

Author:

By FRANCES D'EMILIO | AP

ID:

1547998709987393100

Sun, 2019-01-20 (All day)

ROME: A private rescue boat with dozens of migrants aboard sought permission for a second day to enter a safe port Sunday, but said so far its queries to several nations haven't succeeded. Another vessel crowded with migrants and taking on water, meanwhile, put out an urgent, separate appeal for help in the southern Mediterranean.

Sea-Watch 3, run by a German NGO, said Sunday it has contacted Italy, Malta, Libya as well as the Netherlands, since the boat is Dutch-flagged, asking where it can bring the 47 migrants it had taken aboard. Sea-Watch tweeted that Libyan officials had hung up when it asked for a port assignment.

An Italian state TV reporter aboard Sea-Watch 3 said the rescue took place Saturday about 50 kilometers (30 miles) off the coast west of Tripoli in Libya's search-and-rescue area. Libya-based human traffickers launch flimsy or rickety boats, crowded with migrants hoping to reach Europe and its opportunities for better lives.

Separately, Sea-Watch tweeted Sunday afternoon that it had been urgently contacted by a boat with 100 migrants aboard that said it was taking on water, 12 nautical miles (22 kilometers) from the current location at sea of Sea-Watch 3.

The distressed vessel reported navigational problems and had among the migrants a child "unconscious or deceased," Sea-Watch said. Subsequent communication said the boat was "taking in water" and asked Sea-Watch to call for help, "regardless of what this would mean concerning a possible return to Libya," Sea-Watch said.

The aid group later said Malta on the phone confirmed "that they will come back to us" regarding the distress call, but it wasn't immediately clear what kind of assistance the Maltese might give.

Migrants dread the prospect of being returned to Libya, where they have reported torture including beatings and rapes in overcrowded detention centers.

The governments of Malta and Italy have been refusing to allow private rescue boats rescuing migrants to dock. Both contend that in recent years they have taken in many migrants rescued at sea and that fellow European Union nations must agree to take their share of these asylum-seekers.

Earlier this month, Malta transferred to land 49 migrants who had been aboard Sea-Watch 3 as long as 19 days but refused the boat port entry. They were allowed to set foot on the southern Mediterranean island only after an EU-brokered deal found several countries willing to take them as well as other migrants, who had been rescued at sea earlier in separate operations by

Malta.



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[‘Yemen’s Houthi militia using Iranian-made drone aircraft’: Arab coalition](#)

Sun, 2019-01-20 18:30

JEDDAH: The Arab coalition fighting to support the legitimate Yemeni government said on Sunday that the Houthi militia are in possession of Iranian-made drones – named Shahed 129 – and are using residential areas to hide the aircraft.

Spokesperson Col. Turki Al-Maliki said the Houthis have used the aircraft to carry out a number of attacks and are using Sanaa airport for military purposes.

Speaking at a press conference in the Saudi capital Riyadh, Al-Maliki said a coalition military operation that was conducted in Sanaa on Saturday night

“targeted a Houthi manufacturing and assembly area for drone aircraft.”

He added: “We attacked a helicopter platform belonging to the Houthi militia in an area between Sanaa and Saada.”

Al-Maliki confirmed that Iran had provided the Houthi militia with “Ababil-T drones.”

During the press conference, he displayed videos and pictures of Saturday’s operations against the militia group in Sanaa, models of aircraft used by the Houthis in their attacks and the bombing of a cave used by the Iran-backed terrorist group as a command center in Sanaa.

“Surveillance is ongoing and we will not allow the transfer of technology to terrorist groups,” he said, condemning the Houthi militia’s attack on the Al-Anad Air Base in Lahij Governorate as a “terrorist act.”



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Arab coalition targets Yemen’s Houthi drone capabilities in Sanaa
Yemen’s Houthis imposed war on Arab coalition: Saudi FM Al-Jubeir

[Sudanese security forces deploy in large numbers ahead of fresh protests](#)

Author:

AP

ID:

1547982426466023000

Sun, 2019-01-20 (All day)

KHARTOUM: Sudanese police fired tear gas on Sunday at protesters ahead of a planned march on Parliament in Omdurman, the twin city of Khartoum, witnesses said.

Security forces were earlier deployed in large numbers in anticipation of fresh protests calling on longtime ruler Omar Bashir to step down, according to activists and video clips circulating online.

The videos show hundreds of security forces in all-terrain vehicles in Khartoum and heading to nearby Omdurman, a traditional hotbed of dissent that saw hours of pitched battles between police and protesters last week.

Sunday's anticipated protests come amid a series of strikes, already underway or planned for this week, by professional unions, including doctors, teachers, lawyers and pharmacists. Demonstrations are also expected in other cities on Sunday.

Bashir, who came to power nearly 30 years ago, insists there will be no change of leadership except through the ballot box. Already one of the longest serving leaders in the region, he is expected to run for a new term in office in elections next year.

Bashir has repeatedly warned that the protests could plunge Sudan into the kind of chaos convulsing other countries in the region.

The protests erupted Dec. 19, initially over price hikes and shortages, but soon shifted to calling on the president to step down. Rights groups last week said at least 40 people have been killed in the protests, while the government acknowledged 24 deaths. Analysts say the protests have emerged as the biggest challenge yet to the authority of the veteran leader.

The Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), an umbrella group of trade unions that is leading the ongoing protest movement, called for fresh demonstrations on Sunday and several days over the coming week.

"We are calling for a march to Parliament in Omdurman on Sunday," it said in a statement.

A doctors' committee linked to anti-government protests apologized on Sunday for incorrectly reporting that a child had been killed in demonstrations in Khartoum that took place on Jan. 17.

Sudanese police said that two people had died in demonstrations that rocked Khartoum on Thursday, but protest organizers had reported that three people were killed, including a child, in clashes with riot police.

"This mistake happened because we trusted a confident source, but we are now investigating the matter," a committee of doctors linked to the SPA said in a statement on Facebook, confirming that two people had died in the demonstrations on Thursday.

Riot police had on Thursday broken up a march on the presidential palace in Khartoum, while a rally took place later that day in the capital's Burri district, witnesses said.

Although participants have so far been in the hundreds or low thousands, the continuing protests and strikes pose a challenge to Bashir's rule.

The absence of explicit support by Sudan's Arab allies has made Bashir's position even more tenuous.

However, the protests show a lack of clear leadership and their continuation could invite another military takeover. Union leaders say they want a transitional government of technocrats followed by free elections.

Bashir's position was further weakened when a senior cleric revealed that he and fellow clerics have implicitly suggested to the Sudanese leader in a meeting that he step down, arguing that Islam takes precedence over individuals.

In a surprise disclosure in a Friday sermon, Sheikh Abdul-Hay Youssef said the clerics presented Bashir with a list of demands, including an end to corruption, bringing to justice anyone found responsible for the latest economic crisis and an end to the killing of protesters, something that the Sudanese leader has sought to justify on religious grounds.





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Sudan protesters plan march on parliament, more demos
Sudan police shoot live fire outside home of dead protester

[Syria says air defence responds to Israeli raids](#)

Sun, 2019-01-20 14:15

Syrian air defences on Sunday responded to Israeli air raids in the south of the country, state news agency SANA reported quoting a military source. The air defence systems “prevented Israeli air strikes from achieving their objectives in the south” of the country, the report said without giving further details.

Meanwhile, Israel’s military said its air defence systems intercepted a rocket fired from Syria on Sunday, after Damascus accused Israel of air raids in the country’s south.

“A short while ago, a rocket was fired at the northern Golan Heights and was intercepted by the ‘Iron Dome’ aerial defence system,” a military statement said.

A military spokeswoman confirmed to AFP the rocket was fired from Syria.



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