

Iran must disclose fate and location of hundreds of Ahwazi Arab prisoners: Amnesty International

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Tue, 2018-11-13 23:26

LONDON: Amnesty International called on Tuesday on Iran to disclose the fate of hundreds of Ahwazi Arabs, who they say are being held without access to their families or legal representation.

The human rights group said in a report published Tuesday that it believes a number of Ahwazis have been executed in secret.

Ahwazi exiles told Amnesty that 22 men, including activist Mohammad Momeni Timas, had been killed.

The statement also said that since Sept. 24, up to 600 Ahwazi Arabs had been detained in a wave of arrests following an attack on a military parade in Ahvaz, Khuzestan province, that killed 24 people.

"If confirmed, the secret executions of these men would be not only a crime under international law but also an abhorrent violation of their right to life and a complete mockery of justice, even by the shocking standards of Iran's judicial system," Philip Luther, Amnesty International's Research and Advocacy Director for the Middle East and North Africa said.

"It is difficult to imagine that these individuals could have received a fair trial within merely a few weeks of their arrests, let alone had the opportunity to appeal death sentences." Ahmad Heydari, a 30-year-old ceramics shopkeeper arrested within a few days of the attack in Ahvaz, is also reported to have been killed.

Amnesty said his family heard no news of his fate or whereabouts until Nov. 11, when they were given his death certificate by the Ministry of Intelligence in Ahvaz, and told he had been executed on Nov. 8.

Officials said they were not handing over his body for burial and told the family they were not allowed to hold a memorial service for him.

Amnesty called on the Iranian authorities to reveal the whereabouts of all the detainees "without further delay" and "provide information about what legal procedures have taken place to date."

"While the Iranian authorities have a duty to bring to justice anyone suspected of criminal responsibility for the attack in Ahvaz in fair trials, they must not use this as an excuse to carry out a purge against members of Iran's persecuted Ahwazi Arab ethnic minority," Luther said.



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[UN calls for Hodeidah ceasefire as momentum gathers for Yemen peace talks](#)

Tue, 2018-11-13 22:11

LONDON: The United Nations' aid chief called Tuesday for a ceasefire around Hodeidah amid reports that fighting in the Yemeni city had reduced.

The appeal came amid a flurry of diplomacy to calm tensions ahead of a return to UN-backed talks to try and end the conflict.

Fighting intensified around Hodeidah last week as pro-government troops, supported by the Arab coalition, made advances around the port against the Iran-backed Houthi militia.

AP reported that an informal agreement to reduce hostilities in and around Hodeidah had taken hold in the last two days, in what could be a prelude to peace talks.

However, nearly 147 Houthi militants were killed and dozens wounded in the last 24 hours during battles with government troops, the Yemeni Ministry of Defense said on Tuesday.

The ministry said troops advanced in a number of neighborhoods, securing areas and a school and businesses from the Houthis.

Hodeidah, Yemen's main port, has become the main focus of the conflict, which started in 2014 when the Houthis seized the capital Sanaa.

With dire warnings over the humanitarian situation in the county, pressure is growing for a negotiated end to the conflict. The United States has called for a ceasefire and talks on ending the war while Britain has said it is preparing a Security Council draft resolution that would pave the way to peace talks.

On Tuesday, Mark Lowcock, the UN's under-secretary-general for humanitarian affairs, called for a cessation of hostilities, particularly "around all the infrastructure and facilities on which the aid operation and commercial importers rely."

The UN envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, welcomed the reduction of clashes and said it was a "crucial step" to prevent further humanitarian suffering.

"I am confident that the parties are ready to work on a political solution and am encouraged by the constructive engagement received from all sides," he said.

Sweden is ready to host peace talks as soon as possible to try and negotiate an end to the war in Yemen, Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom said on Tuesday.

"We are preparing ourselves to, when the parties are ready, welcome them in Sweden," she said.

Wallstrom said she hoped the negotiations could begin this month.

UN talks in Geneva to end the war, which has killed nearly 10,000 people, collapsed when the Houthis refused to attend.

*With AP and AFP



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Houthi defector says Iranian-backed militia committed 'heinous crimes' against Yemeni people
Hundreds killed in clashes in Yemen's Hodeida in last 10 days

[Kuwait shuts government offices and schools ahead of next wave of extreme weather](#)

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1542134282917593800

Tue, 2018-11-13 21:37

JEDDDAH: Kuwait will shut government ministries, state institutions and schools from Wednesday after forecasters warned of three days of extreme weather.

The General Directorate of Meteorology, said Kuwait will witness heavy rainfall with the possibility of torrential rains in some areas, the state news agency KUNA reported.

The warning comes after one person was killed and more than 400 injured in flooding last week.

The supreme committee for emergency operations at Kuwait's Ministry of Interior has intensified its efforts to prepare for the unstable weather.

Work has been underway to clear waterways and drains to avoid the the build up of flood water on the streets and main roads, as well as in tunnels.

[@CNN](#) Kuwait floods pic.twitter.com/tJIXaXwfyB

– Kuwait Falcon (@Bin3aim) [November 10, 2018](#)





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Kuwait's public works minister resigns amid severe flooding

[Three killed in Morocco mine collapse](#)

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1542133190997498100

Tue, 2018-11-13 16:30

RABAT: Three people were killed Tuesday and three others injured when a zinc and lead mine collapsed in northeastern Morocco, authorities said, in a region shaken by protests over similar accidents.

The accident occurred near the impoverished former mining town of Jerada a week after two people, including a teenager, died in another collapse of abandoned mines.

Hundreds of illegal miners in the town risk their lives in abandoned mine shafts to extract mainly coal, the sale of which is legal thanks to operating permits issued by Moroccan authorities.

Jerada has been hit by social unrest and peaceful protests following the deaths last December of two brothers trapped in a mine shaft followed by two other deaths under similar circumstances.

Tuesday's accidental deaths took place in the small community of Ras Asfour in a mine that was operating with an official permit, state MAP news agency quoted local officials as saying, unlike previous ones.

Moroccan authorities pledged a series of measures to revive the economy in Jerada, one of the poorest regions of Morocco according to official statistic, and vowed to close all abandoned mines.

In April the government launched a plan aimed at providing alternative means of livelihood for the population amid demands by protesters for "economic alternatives" to "death mines".

Authorities have arrested 95 people in connection with the protests and 25 of them were put on trial, according to a lawyer who has defended some of them. Last week nine protesters were sentenced to jail terms ranging from three to five years on charges including the destruction of public property, incitement to carry out criminal acts and taking part in unauthorised protests.



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Daesh militants attempting to cross into Iraq from Syria: Iraqi PM

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Tue, 2018-11-13 17:59

BAGHDAD: Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi said on Tuesday that hundreds of Iraqi Daesh militants at Deir Ezzor in eastern Syria were trying to cross into Iraq.

The militants have launched attacks in recent weeks against US-backed Kurdish forces on the Syrian side of the border, prompting Iraqi militias that operate alongside the army to reinforce in the area.

Abdul Mahdi said the militants were seeking to recapture territory they had once controlled on the Iraqi side, during Daesh's control of territory that extended from eastern Syria to northern Iraq from 2014 to 2017.

"But Iraqi forces are carrying out their duties to pre-empt any attempts by Daesh to infiltrate the border and cross into Iraq," he told reporters at a news conference.

Daesh militants have since their military defeat in Iraq in 2017 reverted to insurgency tactics such as bombings and attacks on security forces, especially in northern Nineveh and northeastern Diyala provinces.



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