

People in Taiz disappointed after talks fail to end Houthi siege

Sun, 2022-05-29 21:46

AL-MUKALLA: Yemenis in Taiz, a densely populated city in the southwest of the country, have expressed disappointment after discussions between the Yemeni government and the Houthis in the Jordanian capital of Amman failed to lift the Houthi blockade on the city.

The UN Yemen envoy, Hans Grundberg, on Saturday said that the first round of talks did not lead to an agreement on opening roads in Taiz and the other provinces.

The announcement ruined the hopes of thousands of people in Taiz who voiced optimism that the UN-brokered discussions could bring an end to the siege.

"When the discussions started, we expressed hopes that the siege would be finally lifted," Khaled Al-Qadhi, a photographer, told Arab News by telephone from the besieged city.



A demonstrator joins a protest demanding the end of the Taiz blockade. (AFP)

"But the hopes vanished when the Houthi negotiators showed up in talks with military uniform."

The Iran-backed Houthis have imposed a siege on Taiz, Yemen's third-largest

city, for the past seven years after they failed to capture the city after fierce resistance from government troops.

The Houthis blocked the main entrances and roads that link the city with Aden, Sanaa and Hodeidah and planted landmines and deployed snipers to target people attempting to pass through the blocked roads.

Al-Qadhi said that the Houthi siege has forced many patients battling cancer and kidney failure into using unpaved and steep roads to reach health facilities in the city.

"Some people in Taiz see their houses in the Houthi-controlled side of the city but cannot visit them due to the siege," Al-Qadhi said.

"They have to travel for seven to eight hours to reach them," the photographer added.

"The economic situation here is very difficult."

Discussions between the government and the Houthis began on Wednesday and were meant to reach an agreement on opening roads in Taiz and the other provinces under the UN-brokered truce.

The Yemeni government negotiators said that the Houthis resisted the idea of opening the main roads in Taiz and they suggested opening a new narrow road.

Local media reports said that the UN Yemen envoy would be visiting the port city of Aden, the interim capital of Yemen, to discuss opening roads in Taiz and extending the truce with the president of the Presidential Leadership Council, Rashad Al-Alimi, and the government.

Yemenis urged their leaders to reject the Houthi proposal for opening small roads, pressuring them to push for the complete lifting of the Houthi blockade and reject any renewal of the truce if the Houthis refuse to end the siege.

"We want the Presidential Council to lift the siege in any way it sees fit – militarily or politically," Maher Al-Abesi, an activist, told Arab News.

"We want to live in peace like the rest of the provinces where people move safely between their villages and cities," said Al-Abesi.

Other Yemenis criticized their government for accepting the opening of Sanaa airport and Hodeidah port before the Houthi lifted their siege on Taiz.

But the Yemeni government officials responded by saying that they accepted opening the airport before ending the Taiz siege as to end the Houthi excuses for not accepting peace efforts to end the war.

"This great concession during the truce was meant to build confidence and also to put the Houthis in a narrow corner to accept going to negotiations to get Yemen out of this long-running war," Najeeb Ghallab, an undersecretary at the Information Ministry, told Arab News, adding that the Houthis will be

using the truce to build up their forces outside the city before launching a new military operation to take control of it.

The International Crisis Group said on May 19 that the Houthis have no interest in ending their siege on Taiz as it allows them to choke the city economically and keep their rivals holed up.

“The Houthis have had little incentive to improve road access to the city: They control the governorate’s economic heart and are keeping their main local rivals boxed in,” the organization said.



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Yemen government, Houthis discuss final draft of agreement on opening roads in Taiz
Talks begin between Yemeni government and Houthis over reopening of Taiz road

[**Sudan’s military leader lifts state of**](#)

[emergency](#)

Sun, 2022-05-29 21:42

KHARTOUM: Sudan's army chief Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan on Sunday lifted a state of emergency imposed since last year's military coup, the ruling sovereign council said.

Sudan has been reeling from deepening unrest since Burhan led the October 25 coup, upending a fragile transition following the 2019 ouster of president Omar Bashir.

Burhan "issued a decree lifting the state of emergency nationwide," the council said in a statement.

The order was made "to prepare the atmosphere for a fruitful and meaningful dialogue that achieves stability for the transitional period," it added.

Sudan, one of the world's poorest countries, is also struggling from a plunging economy due to decades of international isolation and mismanagement under Bashir.

The UN, along with the African Union and regional bloc IGAD, have been pushing to facilitate Sudanese-led talks to resolve the crisis.

Western governments have backed the UN-AU-IGAD bid and urged Sudanese factions to participate in the process.

Burhan has pledged to free political detainees to set the stage for talks among Sudanese factions.

Last month, Sudanese authorities released several anti-coup civilian leaders.



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One killed in Sudan anti-coup protests: medics

Turkey shows off drones at Azerbaijan air show

Author:

Sun, 2022-05-29 00:08

BAKU: Looping in the air at lightning speed, Turkish drones like those used against Russian forces in Ukraine draw cheers from the crowd at an air show in Azerbaijan.

Turkey is showcasing its defense technology at the aerospace and technology festival "Teknofest" that started in Azerbaijan's capital Baku this week.

Turkey's TB2 drones are manufactured by aerospace company Baykar Defense, where Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's increasingly prominent son-in-law Selcuk Bayraktar is chief technology officer.

On Wednesday, Bayraktar flew over Baku aboard an Azerbaijani air force Mikoyan MiG-29 plane. One of his combat drones, the "Akinci," accompanied the flight.

A video showing Bayraktar in command of the warplane, dressed in a pilot's uniform decorated with Turkish and Azerbaijani flag patches, went viral on social media.

"This has been a childhood dream for me," Bayraktar told reporters after the flight.

Turkey's drones first attracted attention in 2019 when they were used during the war in Libya to thwart an advance by rebel commander, General Khalifa Haftar, against the government in Tripoli.

They were then again put into action the following year when Turkey-backed Azerbaijan in recapturing most of the land it lost to separatist Armenian forces in the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region.

Azerbaijani audience members at the aviation festival applauded during a display of TB2 drones, which are now playing a prominent role against invading Russian forces in Ukraine.

A senior official from the Turkish defense industry said his country was facing a wide spectrum of "threats," including the Kurdistan Workers' Party and Daesh.

The PKK is listed as a terror group by Ankara and its Western allies.

But with NATO allies – including the US – having imposed embargoes on Turkey, Ankara was forced to take matters into its own hands to build defense equipment, the official said. "The situation is changing now with the war in Ukraine," the official said.

Turkey has been looking to modernize its air force after it was kicked out of the F-35 fighter jet program because of its purchase of Russia's S-400

missile defense system.

But Ankara's role in trying to mediate an end to the Ukraine conflict through direct negotiations may have helped improve its relations with Washington in the past months.

In April, US President Joe Biden's administration said it now believed that supplying Turkey with F-16 fighter jets would serve Washington's strategic interests.

Michael Boyle, of Rutgers University-Camden in the US, said Turkish drones such as Bayraktar TB2 drones were "increasingly important to modern conflicts because they have spread so widely."



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Turkey's Erdogan discusses advancing cooperation with UAE's Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed
Turkey captures the new leader of Daesh in Istanbul raid

[**15-year-old Palestinian killed by**](#)

Israeli fire in West Bank

Author:

Sun, 2022-05-29 00:01

JERUSALEM, WASHINGTON: The Palestinian Health Ministry said Israeli forces shot and killed a teenager on Friday during an operation in a town near Bethlehem in the occupied West Bank.

The ministry identified the slain teen as Zaid Ghunaim, 15. It said he was wounded by Israeli gunfire in the neck and back and that doctors failed to save his life.

The death raises to five the number of Palestinian teenagers killed during Israeli military operations in the West Bank in the past month.

Israeli-Palestinian violence has intensified in recent weeks with near-daily arrest raids in Palestinian-administered areas of the West Bank and tensions around a Jerusalem holy site sacred to both Muslims and Jews.

The official Palestinian news agency, Wafa, cited witnesses as saying Ghunaim came upon the soldiers in Al-Khader and tried to run away but the troops fired at him.

SPEEDREAD

Israeli-Palestinian violence has intensified in recent weeks with near-daily arrest raids in Palestinian-administered areas of the West Bank and tensions around a Jerusalem holy site sacred to both Muslims and Jews.

Online videos purportedly of the shooting's aftermath show bloodstains near a white car parked in a passageway.

The Israeli military, which has stepped up its operations in the West Bank in response to a series of deadly attacks inside Israel, said soldiers opened fire at Palestinians who threw rocks and Molotov cocktails, endangering the troops.

"The soldiers provided an injured suspect with initial treatment at the scene" before transferring him to Palestinian medics, the military said in a statement.

Palestinian Premier Mohammad Shtayyeh said Israeli forces "deliberately" shot at Ghunaim with the intention to kill him.

On Sunday, Israeli ultranationalists plan to march through the main Muslim thoroughfare of the Old City of Jerusalem. The compound houses Al-Aqsa Mosque, the third holiest site in Islam. The hilltop site is also the holiest for Jews, who refer to it as the Temple Mount.

Separately, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke on Friday to Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid and stressed the importance of concluding

Israel's probes into the killing of Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh.

"Secretary Blinken underscored the importance of concluding the investigations into the death of Palestinian-American Shireen Abu Akleh," the US State Department said in a statement.

The Palestinian Authority said earlier that its investigation showed that Abu

Akleh was shot by an Israeli soldier in a “deliberate murder.” Israel denied the accusation and said it was continuing its own investigations.

Abu Akleh was shot dead on May 11 while she was covering an Israeli military raid in the city of Jenin in the occupied West Bank. She had been wearing a helmet and a press vest that clearly marked her as a journalist.

Israeli police officers, on May 13, charged at Palestinian mourners carrying the coffin of Abu Akleh, before thousands led her casket through Jerusalem’s Old City in an outpouring of grief and anger over her killing.

The Israeli Army had said previously that she might have been shot accidentally by one of its soldiers or by a Palestinian militant in an exchange of fire.

Palestinian Attorney General Akram Al-Khatib told reporters that its enquiry showed there had been no militants close to Abu Akleh when she died.

Abu Akleh had covered Palestinian affairs and the Middle East for more than two decades. Qatar’s Al Jazeera TV Network, which also says Israel had killed the reporter, said it would refer the killing to the International Criminal Court.



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Palestinians say teen killed by Israeli fire in West BankPalestine and Israel

on the verge of a new escalation

One killed in Sudan anti-coup protests: medics

Author:

AFP

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Sat, 2022-05-28 23:02

KHARTOUM: Sudanese security forces killed Saturday a protester during the latest mass demonstrations against last year's military coup, medics said. The killed protester, yet to be identified, died after "taking a bullet to the chest" during rallies in the capital Khartoum, the pro-democracy Central Committee of Sudan Doctors said.

The latest death brings to 97 the toll from a crackdown on anti-coup protests which have taken place regularly since the October 25 military putsch led by army chief Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, the committee said.

Thousands took to the streets on Saturday in several parts of Khartoum to protest the military power grab and renew demands for civilian rule.

The coup upended a transition to civilian rule after the 2019 ouster of autocratic president Omar Al-Bashir, following mass protests against his three decades of iron-fisted rule.

Sudan, one of the world's poorest countries, has been reeling from a plunging economy due to decades of international isolation and mismanagement under Bashir.

The United Nations, along with the African Union and regional bloc IGAD, have been pushing to facilitate Sudanese-led talks to resolve the crisis.

But civilian forces have refused to enter negotiations involving the military, while Burhan has repeatedly threatened to expel UN envoy Volker Perthes, accusing him of "interference" in the country's affairs.

Sudan has suffered from international aid cuts and economic turmoil since the coup.



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One killed in renewed anti-coup protests in Sudan