

British PM to travel to UAE Sunday after president's death

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LONDON: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson will fly to the UAE on Sunday to pay his condolences following the death of President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Downing Street said.

Johnson's visit will also "reinforce the close bond between the United Kingdom and United Arab Emirates," the statement said.

Those bonds "will continue under the Presidency of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan," it added.

Sheikh Mohammed was elected as president of the Gulf state on Saturday, official media in Abu Dhabi said, a day after the death of former leader Sheikh Khalifa at the age of 73.

In a statement on Friday, Johnson expressed his sadness at the Sheikh's death, calling him "a wise and respected leader who will be missed enormously."

The British leader visited the Emirates in March during a tour of the Gulf region.

The previous month Prince William, grandson of Queen Elizabeth II, attended the celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the former British protectorate.

The two governments announced in September that the UAE will invest billions into the UK.

The five-year investment worth £10 billion (\$13.8 billion) will focus on technology, infrastructure and climate-focused energy transition.



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Middle East and world leaders mourn death of UAE President Sheikh Khalifa, praise 'life rich in achievements'

[Uproar over Israeli plan to build 4,000 settlement units in occupied West Bank](#)

Author:

Sat, 2022-05-14 22:30

RAMALLAH: Fears over the future of the two-state solution in Palestine have mounted after Israel approved a plan to build more than 4,000 settlement units in the West Bank.

The move threatens Palestinians' hopes for a two-state solution and the establishment of an independent state.

If constructed, the settlements will sever the geographical contiguity between the occupied territories.

The Higher Planning Committee of the Israeli Civil Administration approved the construction of 4,427 new settlement-housing units in the occupied West Bank, according to NGO Peace Now.

Fifteen European countries, including France, Germany and Italy, have denounced the plans, and demanded that Israel shelve the proposal.

The US also confirmed its opposition to the new approvals.

The Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the approval of the new settlement plans that include 3,988 housing units, including many isolated outposts.

The ministry said in a statement that the approval was granted despite strong opposition from the US administration, which was expressed by more than one US official last week.

The UN stressed that efforts to build confidence between the Palestinian and Israeli sides and the establishment of a truce is a prelude to resolving the conflict.

The ministry said that "the racist colonial decision comes within the framework of the creeping annexation of the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Masafer Yatta and the Jordan Valley – to eliminate any chance of establishing a viable, geographically connected and sovereign Palestinian state."

Some Palestinian critics argue that the Israeli government is racing against time to resolve the future of the final negotiated issues unilaterally and by force of occupation in accordance with Israel's interests.

It is also trying to preserve the ruling coalition at the expense of Palestinian land and the rights of people, they claim.

The ministry called on the US administration to fulfill its commitments and promises, and to translate its positions and words into actions to pressure the Israeli government to stop all its settlement activities in a way that leads to the protection of the two-state solution.

About 700,000 Israeli settlers live in the West Bank across 125 settlements considered illegal under international law. Some Israelis marked the recent approval with celebrations.

Critics warn that Israeli governments have tolerated and even encouraged settlers to seize Palestinian land in Area C, which forms 60 percent of the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Settlement activities reached their peak during the term of former US president Donald Trump, who supported Israeli unconditionally.

The ruling Israeli regime of Prime Minister Naftali Bennet is an ultimate supporter of settlement expansion and settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, critics say, pointing to Bennet's tenure as mayor of a settlement in the West Bank.

Many in Palestine are deeply concerned that the expansion of settlements is detrimental to the two-state solution and forms a serious threat to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with geographical continuity – a longtime goal of Palestinian political figures.

Mustafa Barghouti, secretary-general of the Palestinian Initiative Party, told Arab News: "This confirms that Israel's intention is to destroy any possibility of establishing an independent Palestinian state."

Barghouti said that the expansion of settlement-building under the Naftali government "is faster than any previous right-wing government, and it is, of course, worse than the Netanyahu government."

He added: "It is shameful that parties such as the left-wing Meretz party and Mansour Abbas' party remain in such a government, which must be brought down immediately."

Barghouti said that Israel "will not be deterred unless sanctions by the US are imposed on it and the companies that invest in settlements."

He noted that the US imposed heavy sanctions on Russia in the wake of the Ukraine invasion, but did not impose a single punitive measure against Israel, despite its apparent violation of international law.





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OIC calls on UN to stop Israeli settlers' attacks Israel advances plans for nearly 4,500 West Bank settler homes

[Jordan announces uranium production](#)

Sat, 2022-05-14 21:27

AMMAN: The Jordanian Uranium Mining Company announced that its extraction plant had produced 20 kilos of yellowcake from 160 tons of uranium ore. Mohammad Shunnaq, general manager of the state-owned JUMCO, said the factory would produce tens of kilograms of yellowcake from processing hundreds of tons of ore over the next few months.

He said Jordan had large uranium reserves and that its central area alone, about 80 km south of Amman, was home to around 42,000 metric tons of uranium oxide.

According to the Jordan Atomic Energy Commission, Jordan has estimated conventional uranium reserves of 140,000 tons.



Shunnaq told Arab News that the extraction of uranium ore deposits, especially in the central region, was easily mined and cost-effective as they were less than 5 meters underground. He described the yellowcake as being of “excellent quality” with an average concentration of 150 ppm (parts per million).

Asked whether Jordan intended to produce large quantities of uranium oxide for commercial purposes, Shunnaq replied: “Yes, that is possible. We will first embark on a large-scale treatment of thousands of tons of uranium ores, conduct feasibility studies, and then evaluate the commercial aspect of such operations.”

The locally produced yellowcake will be used as fuel for the country’s nuclear power reactors.

He said the uranium exploration and extraction operations in the center, called the Central Jordan Uranium Project, were integral to the national nuclear program. It also covered the Nuclear Power Plant Project and the Nuclear Reactor Project for Research and Training.



The Jordanian Uranium Mining Company (JUMCO)

“It is a complementary project, completely for peaceful purposes, aiming to produce electricity and desalinate seawater. All uranium operations in Jordan are well-coordinated with the International Atomic Energy Agency.”

When asked if Jordan would carry out enrichment processing on the uranium yellowcake, he replied: “Jordan will send the yellowcake it produces abroad for the enrichment and then use it to fuel its nuclear reactors.”

In 2015, Jordan signed an agreement with Russia’s Rosatom to build a \$10 billion nuclear power plant with a capacity of 2,000 megawatts. The agreement was aimed at constructing a two-unit power plant at Amra in the north by 2022.

But in May 2018, Jordan announced a plan for a small modular nuclear reactor with Russia, replacing the \$10 billion plant deal signed in 2015 between the JAEC and Rosatom.

With Jordan’s nuclear power plant facing criticism, from environmentalists and lawmakers who have slammed the slow progress in advancing the project, JAEC chairman Khaled Toukan said the commission had achieved “a lot so far despite the small budget.”

Toukan said Jordan was the only Arab country in the Levant region with a nuclear reactor with a capacity of 5 megawatts, stressing that it was a research reactor built with Jordanian expertise in the field.

He added that the focus in 2030 would be on small nuclear reactors for generating electricity, water desalination, and industrial purposes.



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[Jordanian Uranium Mining Company](#)

Iran to enrich uranium to 20% even after deal: Nuclear chief 'Our uranium is key to achieving energy transformation': Saudi minister

[Silent Taiz protest denounces deadly strikes by Houthis](#)

Author:

Sat, 2022-05-14 21:20

AL-MUKALLA: The Yemeni villagers stood in silence, but the words on their placards spoke volumes.

"On TV, we see a truce, but on the ground, we see blood, body parts and siege," read a poster carried by two veiled women and a child.

The unequivocal message was delivered by families in the southwestern Yemeni city of Taiz who held a silent vigil on Saturday to denounce the Houthi shelling of their homes and demand the militia lift its eight-year siege of the center.

Carrying posters that condemned the Houthi attacks, men, women and children

from the residential village of Al-Sailah stood in a line outside their homes to draw attention to deadly militia strikes that have killed and wounded many people, including a child.

"We appeal to the world to act to stop the killing of civilians by the Houthis in Taiz," read another poster.

During the vigil, a Houthi shell exploded near the gathering, Maher Al-Abessi, a local journalist, told Arab News by telephone.

"Shrapnel from the shell fell near us. Luckily, no one was hurt," he said.

The vigil came less than a day after a mortar shell fired by the Houthis ripped through a house in Al-Sailah, killing a 5-year-old child and fatally wounding his parents.

Shelling and other strikes by the Houthis on the besieged city have sparked outrage across Yemen at a time when the UN Yemen envoy is pressuring Yemeni parties to uphold a two-month ceasefire.

"Since the truce was announced, Houthi missiles have intensified and their crimes against civilians in Taiz have multiplied," Mohammed Al-Omada, head of the Yemeni Network for Rights and Freedoms, tweeted.

Sharing an image of the dead child, Hamza Al-Jubaihi, a Yemeni activist who was once abducted and held in a Houthi prison, denounced the militia killing of civilians in Taiz and their violations of the truce.

"This innocent child was killed by the Houthis less than two hours ago with a terrorist shell, and his father and mother were wounded next to him in Taiz. This is the Houthi truce," he said on Twitter.

Under the UN-brokered truce that came into effect on April 2, warring factions were expected to halt hostilities across Yemen, resume flights from Sanaa airport, and allow fuel ships to enter Hodeidah port, while a joint committee would convene to discuss opening roads in Taiz and the other cities.

The Yemeni government said that the Houthis are unwilling to lift their siege of Taiz and have failed to name their representatives on the committee.

On Thursday, the Yemeni government said it would allow passengers with Houthi-issued passports to fly from Sanaa airport, removing a barrier that obstructed the resumption of commercial flights from the Houthi-held Sanaa.

At the same time, a gathering of Yemeni NGOs that document war crimes said in a joint report that the Iran-backed Houthis had raided, blown up and destroyed 12,038 houses in 17 Yemeni provinces from July 2014 to December 2020, and are responsible for displacing hundreds of families living in the properties.

During this period, the Houthis blew up 853 homes, damaged or ruined 462 more and seized 243 houses as they sought to settle scores with people who

allegedly opposed their military expansion across the country.

The Yemeni Coalition to Monitor Human Rights Violations, also known as Rasd Coalition, said that armed Houthis killed 566 civilians, including 51 children and 64 women, and wounded 740 more, including 97 children and 130 women, while raiding houses.

The raids violated religious and tribal norms that forbid terrorizing children and women or displacing them from their homes, the coalition report said.

At the end of the report, it named 29 Houthi leaders responsible for raiding houses, based on interviews with their victims, and demanded the militia stop the attacks and compensate families who had lost their homes.

Mutahar Al-Badhiji, the coalition's executive director, called on human rights groups and journalists to work together to expose violations by the Houthis and pressure the militia to stop the attacks and release abducted civilians.

"There should be human rights and media campaigns directed at the militia to stop these practices and release the civilians who were kidnapped from their homes," Al-Badhiji told Arab News.



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UN envoy for Yemen concludes visit to AdenUN says \$144 million needed to avert Yemen tanker disaster

[Lebanon to deploy 75,000 troops on eve of crucial poll](#)

Author:

Fri, 2022-05-13 23:12

BEIRUT: More than 75,000 troops and security personnel will be deployed at polling stations and key sites around Lebanon from late on Saturday on the eve of crucial parliamentary elections in the country.

Interior Minister Bassam Mawlawi announced the large-scale deployment after meeting with military commanders overseeing security arrangements for Sunday's poll.

More than 3.6 million people are expected to cast their votes in 15 electoral districts around Lebanon, according to interior ministry estimates.

Friday was the final day of campaigning for the candidates' electoral machines, with party leaders and the political forces supporting electoral lists seeking to convince hesitant voters to take part in the elections.

Mawlawi said that security chiefs will work with generator owners to ensure electoral stations have power on polling day.

The election is expected to redraw Lebanon's political map after years of political and social upheaval, with a new president and the approval of a recovery plan to rescue the country from its severe economic crisis.

Electoral messaging reached a peak before a moratorium on campaigning entered into force from midnight on Friday until the ballot boxes are sealed late on Sunday.

Amid persistent calls for an election boycott, religious leaders used their Friday sermons to urge Lebanese people to exercise their right to vote.

Gebran Bassil, leader of the Free Patriotic Movement and the main ally of Hezbollah, said in his live appearances and on social media that "voting for the Lebanese Forces lists equals voting for Israel and its regional allies."

The Lebanese Forces candidates and leaders said that "whoever votes for the Free Patriotic Movement is, in fact, voting for Hezbollah."

Electoral expert Walid Fakhreddin told Arab News that voter turnout will be a major factor in the election.

"There's a desire for change in people that was somehow positively received by the Lebanese Forces, the Phalanges Party, the Progressive Socialist Party and the Amal Movement," he said.

Fakhreddin said the elections "have a high number of disruptive elements, and the Friday sermons were an attempt to change the stance of boycotters."

However, he added that "people make up their minds in the last 15 minutes and we have to expect some tactical voting."

Former prime minister Fouad Siniora, who is sponsoring an electoral campaign in Beirut and candidates in other regions, warned that the outlook for Lebanon would be "harsh and bitter" without serious reforms starting with the parliament.

"This compels every Lebanese to contribute positively to changing the situation, and building a strong state with its exclusively legitimate and official institutions and agencies," he said.

"It also compels them to steer clear from drowning in the vortex of personal considerations and sectarianism, and to focus on the interests of Lebanon and its citizens."

Siniora said that electoral lists he had partnered with in many regions had been targeted by a distortion campaign intended to discredit and divert the attention of Lebanese from the fundamental issues facing the country.

"We want Lebanon to preserve its Arab identity, and remain free and independent," he said.

"We don't want to keep repeating statements intended to blind us from the catastrophic project that would put Lebanon under the Iranian domination through Hezbollah and its weapons."

Siniora believes that "we are running under a poisoned electoral law. However, participating heavily in the polls will counter the fall of Lebanon resulting from the domination of Hezbollah and its allied sectarian parties on the state, its departments, institutions and agencies."

In parallel with the election preparations, Maj-Gen. Abbas Ibrahim, director general of the General Directorate of General Security, inaugurated a new GSS center at the Syrian border point of Mutrabeh.

The new crossing will mean the closure of 18 illegal border points used by Lebanese living in Syria to enter Lebanon, he said.

Ibrahim said that 25 Lebanese towns overlapping Syria and home to 10,000 people will also benefit from a more direct link.



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UN urges crisis-hit Lebanon to 'change course' Sunni preachers in 'vote to save Lebanon' plea