

# Yemen truce could help reverse humanitarian crisis: UN

Author:

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SANAA: The United Nations has warned of a “worsening” humanitarian situation in Yemen but said a fragile two-month truce since early April could help reverse the situation.

“The worsening humanitarian crisis in Yemen is a reality that we need to urgently address,” UN humanitarian coordinator for Yemen, David Gressly, said in a statement released late Saturday.

“Over 23 million people – or almost three-quarters of Yemen’s population – now need assistance... an increase of almost three million people from 2021,” he said.

Gressly urged donors to take advantage of a UN-brokered truce that has largely held since April 2.

“The UN-led truce is a vital opportunity for aid agencies to scale up life-saving assistance and to reach more people in acute need quickly, including in areas where access was limited due to armed conflict and insecurity,” he said.

“For aid agencies to immediately step up efforts, we count on sufficient donor funding. Otherwise, the aid operation will collapse despite the positive momentum we are seeing in Yemen today,” Gressly warned.

He said the UN needs around \$4.3 billion for its 2022 humanitarian response plan for Yemen “to reverse a steady deterioration of the humanitarian situation.”

The plan aims to target 17.3 million people, he said, adding that nearly 13 million people “are already facing acute levels of need.”

Eighty percent of the 30 million population is dependent on aid.

The truce, which can be renewed, has provided the impoverished country with a rare respite from violence.

It has also seen oil tankers begin arriving at the port of Hodeida, potentially easing fuel shortages in Sanaa and elsewhere.

The truce also involved a deal to resume commercial flights out of Sanaa’s airport for the first time in six years, though the inaugural flight planned for late April was postponed indefinitely, with each side blaming the other for holding it up.



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[David Gressly](#)

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## [Iraq yet again hit by dust storm](#)

Author:

Mon, 2022-05-02 00:13

BAGHDAD: Iraq on Sunday was yet again covered in a thick sheet of orange as it suffered the latest in a series of dust storms that have become increasingly common.

Dozens were hospitalized with respiratory problems in the center and the west of the country.

A thick layer of orange dust settled across streets and vehicles, seeping into people's homes in the capital Baghdad.

Flights were grounded due to poor visibility at airports serving Baghdad and the Shiite holy city of Najaf, with the phenomenon expected to continue into Monday, according to the weather service.

“Flights have been interrupted at the airports of Baghdad and Najaf due to the dust storm,” the spokesman for the civil aviation authority, Jihad Al-Diwan, told AFP.

Visibility was cited at less than 500 meters (550 yards), with flights expected to resume once weather improves.

Hospitals in Najaf received 63 people suffering from respiratory problems as a result of the storm, a health official said, adding that the majority had left after receiving appropriate treatment.

Another 30 hospitalizations were reported in the mostly-desert province of Anbar in the west of the country.

Iraq was hammered by a series of such storms in April, grounding flights in Baghdad, Najaf and Irbil and leaving dozens hospitalized.

Amer Al-Jabri, of Iraq’s meteorological office, previously told AFP that the weather phenomenon is expected to become increasingly frequent “due to drought, desertification and declining rainfall.”

Iraq is particularly vulnerable to climate change, having already witnessed record low rainfall and high temperatures in recent years.

Experts have said these factors threaten to bring social and economic disaster in the war-scarred country.

In November, the World Bank warned that Iraq could suffer a 20-percent drop in water resources by 2050 due to climate change.

In early April, environment ministry official Issa Al-Fayad had warned that Iraq could face “272 days of dust” a year in coming decades, according to the state news agency INA.

The ministry said the weather phenomenon could be addressed by “increasing vegetation cover and creating forests that act as windbreaks.”





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## 19th century Iraq church holds first Mass since Daesh defeat

Author:

Mon, 2022-05-02 00:19

MOSUL, Fallujah: Dozens of faithful celebrated Mass on Saturday at a Mosul church in northern Iraq for the first time since it was restored after its ransacking by Daesh terrorists.

Daesh swept into Mosul and proclaimed it their “capital” in 2014, in an onslaught that forced hundreds of thousands of Christians in the northern Nineveh province to flee, some to Iraq’s nearby Kurdistan region.

The Iraqi army drove out the jihadists three years later after months of grueling street fighting that devastated the city.

The Mar Tuma Syriac Catholic church, which dates back to the 19th century, was used by the jihadists as a prison or a court.

Restoration work is ongoing and its marble floor has been dismantled to be completely redone.

In September 2021, a new bell was inaugurated at the church during a ceremony attended by dozens of worshippers.

The 285-kg bell cast in Lebanon rang out on Saturday to cries of joy before the Mass got underway.

The service began with worshippers who packed the church chanting hymns as an organist played.

“This is the most beautiful church in Iraq,” said Father Pios Affas, 82, the delighted parish priest.

Affas also paid tribute to those behind the restoration work which, he said, had “brought the church back to its past glory, like the way it was 160 years ago.”

Inside the church, ochre and grey marble shone in the nave, where the altar and colonnaded arches were restored and new stained glass installed.

Jihadists had destroyed all Christian symbols, including the holy cross, and

parts of the church were damaged by fire and shelling.

Artisans worked diligently to “clean the scorched marble” and restore it, Fraternity in Iraq, a French NGO that aids religious minorities, which helped fund the restoration work said earlier this year.

Outbuildings and rooms on the first floor, where windows have been broken and Daesh graffiti can be seen, are still due to be repaired.

Mosul and the surrounding plains of Nineveh were once home to one of the region’s oldest Christian communities.

Iraq’s Christian population has shrunk to fewer than 400,000 from around 1.5 million before the US-led invasion of 2003 that toppled dictator Saddam Hussein.

Nineveh province was left in ruins after three years of jihadist occupation which ended in 2017 when Iraqi forces backed by US-led coalition airstrikes pushed them out. Several monasteries and churches are being renovated but reconstruction is slow, and the Christian population that has fled has not returned.

Meanwhile, two rockets targeting a base in western Iraq hosting US-led coalition troops on Saturday crashed near the complex without causing casualties or damage, security sources said.

“Two rockets fell outside the Iraqi base of Ain Al-Asad,” a security forces statement said, adding there were no “losses.”

The base, controlled by Iraq, is located in the desert in the western Anbar province and hosts foreign troops from the coalition fighting the Daesh group.

A coalition official said there was “no impact on the installation reported” and “no coalition personnel injuries reported.”

A previously unknown group calling itself “International Resistance” claimed the attack on a pro-Iran channel of messaging app Telegram.

Rockets and drones frequently target the Ain Al-Asad base.



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Head of Ukraine's Orthodox church asks faithful to forgo night Easter services

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## [Turkish police hold dozens in May Day demonstrations](#)

Author:

Mon, 2022-05-02 00:09

ISTANBUL: Turkish riot police detained dozens of protesters trying to reach Istanbul's main Taksim Square for May Day demonstrations against economic hardship caused by raging inflation.

The Istanbul governor's office had allowed May Day celebrations to be held in another district and deemed gatherings in all other locations as unauthorised and illegal.

A Reuters journalist saw riot police brawling with and handcuffing

protesters, images of which were shown on television by domestic broadcasters.

Police also detained 30 people in central Besiktas and 22 others in Sisli districts, the Demiroren News Agency reported. A statement from the Istanbul governor's office on Sunday said that 164 protesters had been detained across the city for "attempting to hold illegal demonstrations."

Marches led by workers and unions are held on May 1 every year as part of International Labor Day celebrations in many countries.

Turkey's annual inflation rate is expected to rise to 68 percent in April, driven higher by the Russia-Ukraine conflict and rising commodity prices, receding only slightly by the end of the year, a Reuters poll showed on Thursday.

The soaring inflation and the economic hardship it causes were cited in May Day statements from several groups.

"Our main theme this year had to be cost of living," the head of the Confederation of Turkish Labor Unions (Turk-Is), Ergun Atalay, said as he placed a wreath in Taksim Square and demanded that minimum wages be adjusted monthly to reflect rising prices. "Inflation is announced at the beginning of each month. The inflation rate should be added to wages every month," he said.

Citizens and trade unions in cities around Europe were taking to the streets for May Day marches, and to put out protest messages to their governments, notably in France where the holiday to honor workers was being used as a rallying cry against newly reelected President Emmanuel Macron.

May Day is a time of high emotion for participants and their causes, with police on the ready.

In Italy, after a two-year pandemic lull, an outdoor mega-concert was set for Rome with rallies and protests in cities across the country. Besides work, peace was an underlying theme with calls for an end to Russia's war in Ukraine.

Italy's three main labor unions were focusing their main rally in the hilltop town of Assisi, a frequent destination for peace protests. This year's slogan is "Working for peace."

"It's a May Day of social and civil commitment for peace and labor," said the head of Italy's CISL union, Daniela Fumarola.

Other protests were planned far and wide in Europe, including in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, where students and others planned to rally in support of Ukraine as Communists, anarchists and anti-EU groups held their own gatherings.



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Turkish police say top Daesh figure captured

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## [Lebanese restaurant serves iftar at Japanese mosque](#)

Author:

Arab News Japan

ID:

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The only mosque in the city of Yokohama, the Yokohama Mosque, served more than 30 meals on Wednesday to Muslims to break their fast during Ramadan. After a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, mosques across Japan have resumed community iftar gatherings, allowing people in the country to enjoy the communal aspect that forms a central part of Ramadan for many. At the Yokohama Mosque, the iftar meals were provided by the Lebanese

restaurant Al-Ain, which is located in Kanagawa. The meals donated by Al-Ain restaurant consist of a main course including rice, a sandwich, a side such as a piece of chicken and dessert.

Ziad Karam, the owner of Al-Ain restaurant said that he tried to help anyone who needed it at the mosque.

The restaurant has also offered a set iftar menu that is created exclusively for the holy month and charges ¥3,500 (\$27) per person. The iftar features a four-course menu that consists of cold and hot mezze platters, main dishes, and desserts to allow guests to indulge in the traditional savory dishes from the Lebanese cuisine.

“Ramadan traditionally has been very busy for us. There are many Japanese people that are interested in the Lebanese cuisine that also join in on the iftar meals,”

Karam said.

Additionally, Al-Ain restaurant will be offering halal lamb for three consecutive days through the provision of a “Eid Al-Fitr Dinner Course” in commemoration with Eid Al-Fitr holidays.



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Demand for local Saudi dish balila rises during RamadanWhy many non-Muslims in Saudi Arabia chose to fast this Ramadan