

Jordan plans electronic tags for detainees to avoid prison overcrowding

Author:

Sat, 2022-04-09 18:42

AMMAN: Jordan will launch an electronic tag program for some detainees in a bid to reduce prison overcrowding and detention costs.

Electronic ankle monitors will be fixed on detainees waiting to receive final court rulings in what the government says is "the first scheme of its kind in the kingdom."

In recent remarks to the Petra news agency, Minister of Justice Ahmed Ziadat said that about 1,500 detainees will be freed under the new e-tagging scheme.

The minister said that electronic tagging is an alternative to institutional confinement and that tags will be fixed on detainees placed under home arrest.

A total of 1,500 detainees will be freed under the scheme, Ziadat said.

The GPS ankle monitor will send an alert to law enforcement agencies specifying the whereabouts of a person if the device has been tampered with or the tagged person goes outside the permissible geographical area.

Authorities have bought 1,500 tags as part of the first phase of the scheme, which has capacity for 5,000 tags.

"The scheme is designed to reduce prison overcrowding and detention costs alongside ensuring that under-trial detainees are held separately from inmates," he said.

A security source, who requested anonymity, told Arab News that the country's 16 rehabilitation centers hold around 20,000 inmates, with prison occupancy rates exceeding 140 percent.

The monthly cost for each prisoner is around 700 Jordanian dinars (\$1,000), with most inmates held on financial and illicit drugs trafficking charges, the source said.



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Jordanian king to undergo surgery in Germany for slipped disc

Author:

Sat, 2022-04-09 18:20

AMMAN: Jordan's King Abdullah is scheduled to depart for Germany on Sunday to undergo surgery to treat a thoracic herniated disc.

In a brief statement on Saturday, the Jordanian Royal Court said that the surgery will take place at a specialized hospital in Frankfurt, Germany this week.

The statement said that the decision to undergo surgery was taken upon the professional advice of Jordanian physicians who examined the king.

The Royal Court said that the king had previously been experiencing intermittent pain in the spinal cord after years of parachuting while serving in the Special Forces. The pressure on the nerve due to the herniation had increased lately, which calls for urgent surgery, according to medical advice.

The surgery will be followed by a period of rest for around a week before the king returns to Jordan, the statement added.



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Jordan's King Abdullah says Palestinian inclusion a must for regional peace and prosperity during talks with Israeli president
Jordan's King Abdullah reiterates two-state Palestinian solution in talks with Israel's Gantz

Optimism prevails as Saudi, Kuwaiti ambassadors return to Lebanon

Author:

Fri, 2022-04-08 22:32

BEIRUT: The Saudi and Kuwaiti ambassadors to Lebanon, Walid Bukhari and Abdul-Al Sulaiman Al-Qenaei, have returned to Beirut, arriving on Friday afternoon amid a resurgence of hope for a reset in diplomatic relations for the beleaguered country.

They landed at Beirut airport less than 24 hours after the Kingdom and Kuwait announced that their envoys would return to Lebanon, sparking optimism about a fresh start with the Arab Gulf states after a five-month diplomatic boycott.

Lebanon's Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdel Latif Derian said: "This decision establishes a new phase of hope and confidence in Lebanon's Arab future, identity, belonging and cooperation with the Gulf countries and the rest of the brotherly Arab states."

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other Gulf states recalled their ambassadors from Lebanon in October 2021 in protest against insulting statements made by former Information Minister George Qordahi regarding the war in Yemen.

On Thursday, the Saudi Foreign Ministry announced Bukhari's return to Beirut. The ministry said the move was made in response to the "calls and appeals of moderate national political forces in Lebanon, and in confirmation of the Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati's statement of the government's commitment to take the necessary and required measures to enhance cooperation with the Kingdom and GCC countries and to stop all political, military and security activities affecting the Kingdom and GCC countries."

The ministry stressed the importance of Lebanon's return to its Arab origins, represented by its national institutions and agencies, in order for the country to enjoy peace and security, and for its people to enjoy stability.

On Friday, the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry announced the return of its ambassador to Beirut in response to "the Lebanese government's commitment to stop all aggressive activities and interventions offensive to Arab countries."

Mikati stressed in a tweet that Lebanon is proud of its Arab affiliation. "Lebanon is committed to the best relations with the Gulf states, which were and will remain a support to us," he noted.

Former Lebanese Prime Minister Tammam Salam telephoned Bukhari, praising "the distinguished brotherly role that the Kingdom has played and continues to play toward Lebanon and the Lebanese."

Interior Minister Bassam Mawlawi said: "Saudi Arabia has proved that Lebanon is in its heart and conscience, and it will never leave it."

The Future Movement said that it hoped that the decision would constitute a step on the way to opening a new page in Lebanese-Gulf relations, stressing the necessity of not using Lebanon as a political, security and media platform to insult the Gulf states and leaders.

The return of Gulf diplomatic ties coincided with the announcement of a staff-level agreement between Lebanon and the International Monetary Fund, which has also contributed to a sudden wave of positivity.

On Friday, the IMF published the full text of the draft agreement with the Lebanese government.

Deputy Prime Minister Saadeh Al-Shami said: "A preliminary agreement has been reached for a four-year extended fund facility. This economic and financial reform program aims to stimulate growth and provide job opportunities and put Lebanon on the path to recovery after the economy shrunk by more than 60 percent during the past two years, the local currency collapsed, inflation reached very high levels, and poverty hit unprecedented rates."

The agreement needs the approval of the IMF, the Lebanese government and parliament, especially with regard to urgent laws that must be approved before obtaining the final approval of the IMF's board of directors for the program.

Al-Shami noted: "This program is based on providing an environment conducive to economic activity by implementing the necessary structural reforms to restore growth and secure job opportunities, restructure the banking sector to be able to restore its role in financing the economy and improve public finances to secure debt sustainability while increasing expenditures on social sectors and infrastructures."

He added: "It also revolves around reforming the public sector and its institutions, especially the electricity sector, to secure better electricity supply, which helps in easing the burdens on citizens and reviving the economic movement, in addition to unifying the exchange rate, improving governance and fighting corruption with technical assistance from the IMF."

"The longer we delay in implementing the required reforms, the higher the cost will be on the national economy and, consequently, on citizens," Al-Shami warned.

"We hope that the prior conditions set by the IMF are met in order to have a program approval," Central Bank Gov. Riad Salameh told Reuters, describing the agreement as "a positive event for Lebanon that will contribute to the unification of the exchange rate," noting that the Central Bank cooperated and facilitated the mission.

Speaking to the Middle East News Agency, Salameh said: "The gold reserves at the Central Bank amounted to \$17.547 billion as of February, so Lebanon maintains its position with the second-largest gold reserves in the Arab region, with a wealth estimated at about 286 tons of gold."

He added: "As of February, the total cash reserves of foreign currencies amounted to \$12.748 billion and the stock portfolio amounted to \$4.197 billion and includes Euro bonds, a slight increase from January."

Salameh said: "The remittances of Lebanese working abroad amounted to about \$6.4 billion in 2021."

He added: "The crisis that hit the financial sector in Lebanon is being addressed in the recovery plan that is being prepared by the Lebanese government in cooperation with the IMF."

Salameh said: "Rumors about the Central Bank going bankrupt are false; the bank is exercising its role entrusted to it under Article 70 of the Code of Money and Credit and will continue to do so, despite the losses that afflicted the financial sector in Lebanon."



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Saudi Arabia's foreign ministry announces return of Kingdom's ambassador to Lebanon
IMF, Lebanon reach staff-level funding deal, subject to reforms

[Al-Aqsa worshippers enjoy peaceful Friday prayer amid Tel Aviv attack tensions](#)

Author:

Fri, 2022-04-08 22:22

RAMALLAH: About 50,000 Palestinians peacefully performed the first Friday prayer of Ramadan at Al-Aqsa Mosque amid tightened Israeli security procedures in the wake of Thursday's Tel Aviv violence that left two Israelis killed.

Four of the 15 people injured in the attack are in a serious condition, according to Israeli medical sources.

Thousands of Israeli citizens and Palestinians from the West Bank flocked to the mosque early in the morning after passing through Israeli military checkpoints at the entrances to Jerusalem.

About 3,000 Israeli policemen were deployed throughout East Jerusalem, the Old City and at the gates leading to the mosque. There was no untoward incident.

Ikrima Sabri, the imam at Al-Aqsa, praised the worshipers who came to the mosque from far away places facing Israeli checkpoints and urged Muslims to pray at Al-Aqsa regularly, with special emphasis on the nightly taraweeh prayer.

Ibrahim Al-Anbawi, 53, from the Anata refugee camp near Jerusalem, told Arab News that the prayer took place "quietly and without tension." There were fewer worshippers because of Thursday's Tel Aviv attack and fears of consequences, he added.

Al-Anbawi, who offers Friday prayers at Al-Aqsa every week, said the sermon was confined to religiosity, without any reference to the current political situation to avoid stirring up feelings.

Meanwhile, the Tel Aviv shooting attack in which a Palestinian gunman shot dead two people at a bar continues to cast a shadow over life in both the West Bank and Israel.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas condemned the attack and stressed the dangers of "continuing the repeated incursions into Al-Aqsa Mosque and the provocative actions of extremist settler groups."

However, the attack was praised by several Palestinian factions and much of the public.

The officers found the shooter hiding near a mosque in Jaffa, just south of Tel Aviv, Israel's Shin Bet security agency said. During an exchange of fire, the attacker was killed, the agency added.

A son of a retired Palestinian security officer, attacker Ra'ad Hazem, 29, was from the Jenin refugee camp in the north of the West Bank.

A high-ranking Palestinian security officer, who preferred anonymity because he is not authorized to talk to the media, told Arab News that the recent attacks in Israel constituted a "pivotal shift," with attackers switching from knives to guns, "which causes more victims and spreads a state of terror in the Israeli street."

He said these attacks "reflect the state of anger in the hearts of the Palestinians against the continued Israeli oppression and the absence of any political or economic horizon."

Palestinian factions said the Tel Aviv attack represented a natural response to the "crimes of the Israeli occupation and the continuation of its violations in occupied Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa Mosque."

Thirteen Israelis have been killed, and more than 20 others wounded in four attacks carried out by Palestinians in less than a month.

The Israeli Channel 12 said the demand for psychological help in the country has increased tenfold over the past two weeks after the Beersheba and Tel Aviv strikes.

Condemning the attack, Israeli Premier Naftali Bennett said: "Our war on deadly terrorism is long and difficult, but we will win it."

Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid said: "We will fight terrorism together, strike the resistance fighters wherever they hide, find their senders and collaborators anywhere, and not rest until calm returns to the streets."

In contrast, Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz said: "We will expand our operations against the wave of attacks. The price we will exact from the perpetrators of the attacks and their senders will be heavy."

Gantz said that Israel arrested 200 Palestinians, and "if necessary, we will arrest thousands more."

Abbas said the killing of Palestinian and Israeli civilians "only leads to a further deterioration of the situation, as we all strive to achieve stability, especially during the holy month of Ramadan, and the upcoming Christian and Jewish holidays."

Abbas warned against "exploiting this condemned incident to carry out attacks against our Palestinian people."

He stressed "the danger of the continued and repeated incursions into Al-Aqsa and the provocative actions of extremist settler groups everywhere."

He said the cycle of violence confirms that "permanent, comprehensive and just peace is the shortest and correct way to provide security and stability for the Palestinians, Israelis and people of the region."

Gantz praised Abbas's condemnation of the attack.



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Israel PM gives security forces free rein after deadly Tel Aviv attack
Demand for tasty, tangy pickles increases during Ramadan in Palestine

[Head of Yemeni presidential council says committed to ending war](#)

Fri, 2022-04-08 21:11

RIYADH: Chairman of the newly formed Presidential Leadership Council in Yemen Rashad Al-Alimi pledged on Friday to end the war and establish a comprehensive and urgent peace process.

Speaking a day after he was appointed to lead the council, Al-Alimi affirmed full commitment to the Gulf initiative, the Riyadh Agreement, and the Yemeni national dialogue.

"We will work to achieve the demands of Yemenis without exception or

discrimination,” he said, calling on Yemenis to rally around state institutions.

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