

[UAE foils new Houthi ballistic missile attack](#)

Mon, 2022-01-31 00:44

RIYADH: The United Arab Emirates on Monday said it has intercepted and destroyed a ballistic missile launched by Yemen's Houthi militia amid a first-ever visit by Israel's president.

The attack did not result in any losses as the shrapnel of the ballistic missile fell outside populated areas, the UAE Ministry of Defense said in a statement carried by WAM news agency.

UAE air forces, together with the Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen, subsequently destroyed the missile launch site in Yemen's Al-Jawf governorate, the statement said.

The UAE defense ministry affirmed its "full readiness to deal with any threats," adding that it will "take all necessary measures to protect the UAE from any attacks."

The Houthi attack came hours after Israel's President Isaac Herzog arrived in Abu Dhabi to seek stronger regional ties.

The UAE, along with Bahrain, signed US-brokered normalization agreements with Israel, dubbed the "Abraham Accords," in 2020. The two Gulf states and Israel share concerns about Iran and its allied forces in the region.

Herzog discussed security and bilateral relations with the UAE's de facto ruler, Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, in Abu Dhabi.

Herzog spent the night in Abu Dhabi, and he will continue his UAE visit despite the Houthi attack, his office said.

The UAE General Civil Aviation Authority assured the public the latest Houthi atrocity has not affected air traffic in the country.

"The air traffic in the country is going as usual, and operations of all flights are running normally. There is no impact on flights and airports as a result of the ballistic missile launched by the terrorist Houthi militia," the authority said.



وزارة الدفاع MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

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Houthis 'recruiting thousands of Yemeni children' Loyalists drive Houthis from swaths of Yemen

[Gulf states review Lebanon's response to proposal to ease row](#)

Author:

Sun, 2022-01-30 23:31

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait said on Sunday that a Lebanese response to a list of suggested measures to ease a diplomatic rift with Gulf countries is currently under review.

Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Sabah said that receiving the response was a "positive step by the Lebanese authorities."

He was speaking during a news conference following a meeting of Arab foreign ministers, which was attended by Lebanon's top diplomat Abdallah Bou Habib.

Sheikh Ahmed visited Beirut last week and handed Lebanese leaders a list of suggested measures to ease a diplomatic rift with Gulf countries.

In October, Saudi Arabia and its allies suspended diplomatic ties with Lebanon after the airing of comments by then Information Minister Georges Kordahi criticizing the military conflict in Yemen.

Kuwait recalled its ambassador from Beirut and also asked Beirut's charge d'affaires to leave the emirate.

Kordahi resigned in November, in a bid to ease the standoff and French President Emmanuel Macron said Paris and Riyadh had agreed to fully engage to restore diplomatic ties.

"It is now up to the relevant parties in Kuwait and in the Gulf states to study this response in order to find out what will be Lebanon's next step," said Sheikh Ahmed.

He thanked Beirut "for interacting" with the demands, which he said was a positive step.

The measures presented by Kuwait are part of wider efforts to restore trust between Lebanon and its Gulf neighbors as Beirut grapples with an unprecedented financial crisis.

The terms delivered to Beirut on Jan. 22 include setting a time frame for implementing UN Security Council resolutions, among them Resolution 1559 which was adopted in 2004 and calls for the disarmament of nonstate militias in Lebanon.

The Lebanese draft letter had expressed respect for UN resolutions "to ensure civil peace and national stability" and said that Lebanon "will not be a launchpad for activities that violates Arab countries."

Despite Kordahi's resignation, tension between Lebanon and Gulf states has persisted, mainly over Iran-backed Hezbollah.

Earlier this month, Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Beirut called on Lebanese political parties to "end Hezbollah's terrorist hegemony over every aspect of the state."

Also on Sunday, the Maronite Christian patriarch said former Prime Minister Saad Hariri's decision to step back from politics and boycott a parliamentary election in May must not be used as an excuse to call for a delay.

Cardinal Bechara Boutros Al-Rahi said he was surprised by the decision and said he hoped Sunnis would still take part so the election "expresses the position of all Lebanese."

Hariri's decision has turned the electoral landscape on its head, adding to

the uncertainties facing the country.

“Given the importance of this parliamentary (election), we must all confront attempts to circumvent it,” Al-Rahi said, noting the new parliament would elect President Michel Aoun’s replacement.

Referring to Hariri’s decision, he said “it is not allowed for some to invoke the new reality and promote the postponement of the parliamentary elections.”

He did not say to whom he was referring.

Lebanon’s 2018 election produced a majority for Hezbollah and its allies, who include Aoun. Its adversaries hope to overturn this in May.

Al-Rahi is a critic of Hezbollah, saying it has harmed Lebanon by dragging it into regional conflicts.

While none of Lebanon’s main parties have called for an election delay, many observers believe this may well suit a number of influential players.

Western states want the vote to go ahead on time.

Saad Hariri will leave a fractured Sunni community in his wake.

On Friday, his older brother, Bahaa signaled he was entering politics, saying he would “continue the journey” of his father Rafik Al-Hariri.

Bahaa plans to support candidates but will not be running himself.



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Lebanese patriarch warns against calls for postponing vote
Aoun stresses Sunnis' role in preserving Lebanon unity

[Sudanese anti-coup protester killed in violent crackdown](#)

Author:

Sun, 2022-01-30 23:15

CAIRO: Sudanese security forces killed a protester on Sunday as they cracked down on thousands marching for civilian rule, medics said, taking the number killed since last year's military coup to a least 79.

Thousands of protesters took to the streets of Sudan's capital and other cities across the country for the latest in a months-long string of demonstrations denouncing the October military coup that plunged the country into turmoil.

They called for a fully civilian government to lead the country's now-stalled transition to democracy.

The coup has upended Sudan's transition to democratic rule after three decades of repression and international isolation under former President Omar Bashir.

The African nation has been on a fragile path to democracy since a popular uprising forced the military to remove Bashir and his government in April 2019.

The protests are called by the Sudanese Professionals Association and the Resistance Committees, which were the backbone of the uprising against Bashir and relentless anti-coup protests in the past three months.

Footage circulated online showed people beating drums and chanting anti-coup slogans in the streets of Khartoum and its twin city Omdurman.

Protesters were also seen carrying Sudanese flags and other flags with photos of protesters reportedly slain by security forces printed on them.

They marched toward the presidential palace, an area in the capital that has seen deadly clashes between protesters and security forces in previous rounds of demonstrations.

FASTFACT

The protests are called by the Sudanese Professionals Association and the Resistance Committees, which were the backbone of relentless anti-coup protests in the past three months.

Security forces fired tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse protesters in at least one location in the capital.

At least three people suffered injuries from rubber bullets, said activist Nazim Sirag.

There were protests elsewhere in the country including the eastern city of Port Sudan, western Darfur region and Madani, the capital city of Jazira province, about 135 km southeast of Khartoum.

Madani saw a massive anti-coup protest last week.

Ahead of the protests, authorities stepped up security in Khartoum and Omdurman.

They deployed thousands of troops and police and sealed off central Khartoum, urging protesters to assemble only in public squares in the capital's neighborhoods.

The UN mission in Sudan on Saturday warned that such restrictions could increase tensions, urging authorities to let the protests "pass without violence."

Since the coup, at least 78 people have been killed and hundreds of others wounded in a widely condemned crackdown on protests, the Sudan Doctors Committee, which tracks casualties among protesters, said.



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Sudanese rally against UN bid to resolve crisis
Sudan frees medics held in crackdown on anti-coup protests

[Syrian Kurdish forces end mop-up operations in Daesh-hit jail](#)

Author:

AFP

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1643569138842128500

Sun, 2022-01-30 17:45

HASAKEH: US-backed Kurdish forces on Sunday said they had defeated all Daesh fighters left inside the Syrian jail that the extremists stormed 10 days ago sparking battles that left over 330 dead.

The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) announced the end of its mopping-up campaign inside the prison "after ending the last pockets in which IS terrorists were present," it said in a statement.

Daesh fighters on January 20 launched their biggest assault in years on the Ghwayran prison in the Kurdish-controlled northeastern Syrian city of

Hasakah, aiming to free fellow militants.

After six days of intense fighting, the SDF announced on Wednesday they had recaptured the prison, but intermittent clashes continued until Saturday between Kurdish fighters and extremists near the jail.

Several Daesh fighters had been holed up in "northern dormitories" inside the prison, but the SDF on Sunday said they been defeated.

Daesh gunmen had been hiding in prison "cellars that are difficult to target with air strikes or infiltrate," the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

The war monitor, which relies on a network of sources inside Syria, said operations were still ongoing near the prison hunting for escaped Daesh fugitives.

"Dozens of IS members managed to escape from Ghwayran prison... in the early hours of the attack," the war monitor said.

It reported that 20 Daesh fighters had surrendered on Saturday, while the SDF killed another five in an exchange of fire inside the prison.

The Britain-based group said that 332 people had been killed since the onset of the attack, including 246 Daesh militants, 79 Kurdish-led fighters and seven civilians.

The death toll rose overnight on Sunday after the SDF found over 50 more bodies in prison buildings and nearby areas, the war monitor said.

"The newly discovered bodies were inside and outside the prison," Rami Abdel Rahman, who heads the Observatory, told AFP.

He said the death toll was likely to rise further, because "there are dozens of people who are wounded, others who are still missing, and information about more casualties" on both sides.

On Saturday, an AFP correspondent saw a truck carrying away piles of bodies from an area near the prison, believed to be those of Daesh fighters.

A bulldozer dumped more corpses onto the truck, which then headed to an unknown location.

Farhad Shami, who heads the SDF's media office, told AFP that the bodies would be buried in "remote, dedicated areas" under SDF control.

The violence prompted 45,000 people to flee Hasakah, the United Nations said. Many took refuge in relatives' homes, while hundreds more slept in the city's mosques and wedding halls.

The war in Syria, which broke out in 2011, has killed close to half a million people and spurred the largest conflict-induced displacement since World War II.



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Syrian fighters search for Daesh sleeper cells near prison
Iraqi airstrikes kill 9 Daesh militants, including 4 Lebanese

[Iraqi airstrikes kill 9 Daesh militants, including 4 Lebanese](#)

Author:

By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA | AP

ID:

1643567380711998300

Sun, 2022-01-30 13:17

BAGHDAD: Iraqi airstrikes killed nine suspected Daesh fighters, including four Lebanese, in retaliation for an attack on Iraqi army barracks earlier this month, officials said Sunday.

Daesh gunmen in Iraq broke into a barracks in the mountainous Al-Azim

district outside the town of Baqouba on Jan. 21, killed a guard and shot dead 11 soldiers as they slept. It was one of the boldest attacks by the militants in recent weeks and came amid an uptick in violence that stoked fears the group has been re-energized.

Yehia Rasool, the spokesman for Iraq's commander in chief, said the joint military operations room and the air force identified the cell behind the attack as its members hid in Al-Azim, north of Baghdad.

Three airstrikes were launched that killed the nine militants, he said.

A security official told The Associated Press that four among the killed were Lebanese, natives of the northern town of Tripoli. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to reporters.

Tripoli is Lebanon's second largest city and the country's most impoverished. It has been prone to violence and militants who, inspired by the extremist Daesh group, launched attacks against Lebanon's army in 2014 in the most serious bout of violence in the city. As Lebanon faces an unprecedented convergence of crises, including a swift descent into poverty, many fear militants may seek to exploit discontent among the city's majority Sunni residents.

Lebanon's Al-Jadeed TV gave a higher death toll, saying that five Lebanese were killed in Iraq. One family member appealed in the broadcast to Lebanese authorities to facilitate return of the bodies.

Also Sunday, Iraqi anti-terrorism units carried out an inspection campaign in seven prisons in Iraq holding Daesh militants. The campaign comes after a brazen prison attack Daesh militants carried out in northeastern Syria that lasted for over a week and in which an unknown number of suspects escaped, the anti-terrorism unit said in a statement.

Daesh was largely defeated in Iraq in 2017. The group was dealt a final blow in 2019 when it lost its last territory in southeast Syria during the US-led military campaign in cooperation with Syrian Kurdish-led forces.

But thousands of militants melted into the desert and have continued to wage attacks, frequently hitting security forces and military with roadside bombs and firing on military convoys or checkpoints in both countries.



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US woman charged with leading all-female Daesh battalion that targeted colleges
Two years of stalemate show a military solution in Syria is an illusion, says UN envoy