

Sudanese rally against UN bid to resolve crisis

Author:

Wed, 2022-01-26 23:55

KHARTOUM: Thousands of Sudanese pro-military protesters rallied on Wednesday against a UN bid to resolve a political crisis in the country three months after a coup.

The demonstrators gathered outside the Khartoum office of the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan, or UNITAMS, which launched talks with Sudanese factions this month.

They held up banners that read, "Down, down UN," and others that urged UN special representative Volker Perthes to "Go back home."

"We don't want external intervention in our country," protester Hamed Al-Bashir said.

On Jan. 10, Perthes said the consultations aimed "to support the Sudanese to reach an agreement on a way out of the current crisis." But he added that "the UN is not coming up with any project, draft or vision for a solution."

On Wednesday, UNITAMS said protesters had gathered outside the mission's office demanding to expel the mission.

"We defend freedom of assembly & expression and offered to receive a delegation in our premises which they refused," it said on Twitter.

Sudan has been rocked by a deadly crackdown against protests calling for civilian rule since an October 25 military coup led by Gen. Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan.

The country's latest military takeover derailed a power-sharing transition between the army and civilians that had been painstakingly negotiated after the 2019 ouster of longtime autocrat Omar Bashir.

The ruling Sovereign Council – formed by Al-Burhan after the coup with himself as chairman – has welcomed the UN-led dialogue, as have the US, Britain, neighboring Egypt, the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

The Forces for Freedom and Change, Sudan's main civilian bloc, has also said it would join consultations "to restore the democratic transition."

In a Wednesday press conference, FFC leader Omar Al-Degeir called on the international community to stand by "the Sudanese people to achieve its demands to reverse the coup."

Stephanie Khoury, UNITAMS director of political affairs, said earlier: "Our role at this stage of consultations for a political process for #Sudan is to

hear Sudanese stakeholders; ensure we actively listen to their views, document their visions & suggestions.”

An 18-year-old protester died on Wednesday after suffering a bullet wound to the head during protests last month, according to the Central Committee of Sudan Doctors.

His death brought the number of people killed in the crackdown on anti-coup demonstrations to 77, including others who were also shot in the head, it said.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Sudan](#)

[UN](#)

[Sudan protests](#)

Sudan frees medics held in crackdown on anti-coup protests
Three killed as Sudanese security forces crack down on protest

UK hosts Quint meeting on Yemen, condemns Houthi attacks

Wed, 2022-01-26 23:45

LONDON: Senior representatives of the governments of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Oman, the UK, and the US, along with UN special envoy, Hans Grundberg, met in London on Wednesday to discuss the situation in Yemen.

"The Quint strongly condemned the Houthis' repeated attacks against civilians within Yemen, including US local staff in Sanaa, and their continued heinous terrorist attacks against Saudi Arabia and more recently the UAE," they said in a joint statement.

The Iran-backed Houthi militia have stepped up cross-border attacks against populated areas in Saudi Arabia and have attempted to strike the UAE capital twice in the last two weeks. The Houthis have also continued their brutal offensive on the Yemeni province of Marib, which has served as a safe haven for millions of internally displaced persons who have been fleeing the fighting since the conflict began in 2014.

The Quint said "such actions are obstructing peace efforts and exacerbating suffering," and stressed that "terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security," and the need to hold perpetrators accountable and brought to justice.

The joint statement expressed full support for Saudi Arabia and the Emirates and their legitimate national security concerns and called for an immediate end to attacks by the Iran-backed militia.

"The Quint acknowledged the legitimate right of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to defend themselves against terrorist attacks in accordance with international (and) humanitarian law, including taking all feasible precautions to avoid civilian harm," it said.

The meeting also condemned the Houthis' seizure of the UAE flagged Rwabee vessel off the coast of Yemen, and called for the need to find an urgent solution to the abandoned SAFER tanker, urging the Houthis to allow UN access to the vessel.

They said these highlight the Houthis' significant risk to the maritime security of vessels in the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea.

"The Quint discussed the illicit Iranian provision of missiles and advanced weaponry to the Houthis in violation" of UN Security Council resolutions, the statement added.

The Quint called for urgent and comprehensive political solution to the conflict and re-affirmed their support for the UN special envoy's efforts. It also called for additional economic support from the international community to stabilize Yemen's economy, coupled with essential reforms to improve financial transparency.

They agreed to meet on a regular basis to coordinate a response to the Yemen crisis and support the UN envoy.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[United Kingdom](#)

[Yemen](#)

[Houthi](#)

[Hans Grundberg](#)

[Saudi Arabia](#)

[UAE](#)

[United States](#)

[Britain](#)

Yemeni army pushes into Marib province as Houthis retreat
Iran uses Yemen as base for attacking neighbors, says Yemen PM

[Algerian minister calls for vaccination amid virus surge](#)

Wed, 2022-01-26 23:53

ALGIERS: Algeria's health minister on Tuesday urged people to get vaccinated and save hospitals from collapse as the North African nation faces a surge of COVID-19 infections.

Algeria is battling infections from both the delta variant and the highly contagious omicron variant, which now accounts for 60 percent of COVID-19 infections.

On Monday, health officials reported a daily record of 2,215 cases and 13 deaths.

“I urge you to get vaccinated and break the chain of infections which risk bringing our health institutions to their knees,” Health Minister Abderahmane Benbouzid said at a media conference in the capital, Algiers. “For now, the hospitals’ staff are managing. The question is, how long can they hold on?”

Omicron is less likely to cause severe illness than the previous delta variant, according to studies. Omicron spreads even more easily than other coronavirus strains, and has already become dominant in many countries. It also more easily infects those who have been vaccinated or had previously been infected by prior versions of the virus.

The inoculation rate in Algeria remains low. Less than a quarter of the population has had even one vaccine dose despite the government’s robust vaccination campaign in state media and on social networks that includes pro-vaccine posts from famous Algerian actors, singers, athletes and influencers.

Algeria has a stock of vaccines that can largely ensure coverage of vaccination needs for two years, the minister said. Overall, only 13 percent of Algeria’s 45 million inhabitants, have been inoculated, the minister said. Of eligible adults, only 29 percent have received two vaccine doses, he said.

In December, Algeria started requiring a vaccine passport to enter many public venues, seeking to overcome vaccine hesitancy that has left millions of vaccines unused.

The pass is also required for anyone entering or leaving Algeria, as well as for entering sports facilities, cinemas, theaters, museums, town halls and other sites like hammams – bath houses that are popular across the region.

Official figures show Algeria has seen 6,508 COVID-19-related deaths since the pandemic began, but even members of the government’s scientific committee admit the real figure is much higher. Out of fears of being blamed for getting the virus, some Algerians keep their infections secret, which then puts others at risk.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Algeria](#)

[Algiers](#)

[Coronavirus vaccination](#)

Egyptian, Algerian presidents hold talks in Cairo
Algerian boy, 15, wins scholarship to UK's most prestigious school

[Vaccinated tourists need no boosters to enter Abu Dhabi: Authorities](#)

Wed, 2022-01-26 23:41

DUBAI: Authorities in the UAE have published new information about the capital's entry requirements, saying that unlike residents and citizens, vaccinated tourists do not need to show proof of a booster shot to cross into Abu Dhabi.

The tourism-specific change comes as confusion swirls around entry rules for Abu Dhabi, which has taken a more stringent approach to containing the coronavirus than its freewheeling neighbor, Dubai.

The pandemic has prompted Abu Dhabi to erect a hard border with Dubai, forcing all drivers to come to a halt for vaccination and virus checks on what once had been a wide, empty highway before the pandemic struck.

The emirate has clarified that all citizens and residents seeking entry must now show proof of a booster shot to be considered fully vaccinated and maintain a “green status” on the government health app.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[UAE](#)

[COVID-19](#)

UAE resumes entry for travellers from 12 African countries
UAE records marks 2,369 new coronavirus cases over past 24 hours

[Iraq's top court upholds reelection of parliament speaker](#)

Author:

Wed, 2022-01-26 23:33

BAGHDAD: Iraq's top court has confirmed the reelection of Mohammed Al-Halbussi as parliament speaker, following appeals against its conduct, paving the way toward the formation of a new government.

Hours later, rockets fell some 500 meters from Al-Halbussi's home in the Gurma district of Anbar province, in what a security source told AFP was an attack that sought to target him.

Two lawmakers had appealed Al-Halbussi's reelection as speaker, a position historically reserved for Iraq's Sunni Arab minority, during parliament's opening session earlier in January which was overshadowed by disputes between rival blocs from the Shiite majority.

"The Federal Supreme Court rejected the appeal of two MPs who demanded the annulment of the inaugural session of parliament on Jan. 9," in which Al-Halbussi was reelected, said presiding judge Jassim Mohammed Aboud.

The ruling will allow the resumption of parliament sessions, and along with them deliberations over the selection of a new president, who will in turn choose the next prime minister, to be approved by the legislature.

Lawmakers have until Feb. 8 to elect a president – a post historically allocated to a Kurd.

But negotiations between parties and coalitions seeking to form a parliamentary majority have been marked by tensions, particularly between key Shiite currents seeking to exert their influence.

Both the Coordination Framework and another bloc formed by firebrand Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr claim to have the majority needed to elect a president.

The legislature opened earlier this month to furious arguments between the rival factions.

Amid the debate, Mahmud Al-Mashhadani – the oldest member of parliament who was therefore chairing the opening session – was taken ill and rushed to hospital.

When the session resumed an hour later, lawmakers reelected Al-Halbussi of the Sunni Taqadom party as speaker.

Appeals against the speaker's reelection were filed by Mashhadani and another MP, Bassem Khachan.

After Wednesday's rocket attack, two wounded children were "taken to hospital in Gurma," Iraqi police said in a statement.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack.

Several grenade attacks have in recent days targeted political figures from parties that could team up with Shiite leader Moqtada Sadr to form a parliamentary coalition in the wake of Iraq's October legislative elections.

Sadr, whose bloc took the largest share of seats, is seeking to build a coalition bringing together Taqadom – Al-Halbussi's party – a second Sunni party and a Kurdish grouping.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Iraq](#)

Iraqi parliament holds first session, elects speaker
Iraq's Shiite divide makes forging government tough task