

# Abu Dhabi announces new COVID-19 restrictions at social events

Mon, 2021-12-27 00:44

RIYADH: Abu Dhabi announced it was updating its COVID-19 guidelines for holding indoor and outdoor social events from Monday, in an effort to reduce the number of daily infections, the emirate's media office said on Sunday. The Abu Dhabi Emergency, Crisis and Disasters Committee said "updates include reducing operating capacity of social events such as weddings, funerals and family gatherings, to a maximum of 60 percent" capacity.

Up to 50 people are permitted at indoor events, and attendees at outdoor events and open-air activities should not exceed 150, while social events at home should not host more than 30 people.

Abu Dhabi Emergency, Crisis and Disasters Committee has updated measures to host indoor and outdoor social events and family celebrations, effective 27 December 2021, enhancing precautionary measures to protect public health. [pic.twitter.com/v0tsflyd6S](https://pic.twitter.com/v0tsflyd6S)

– مكتب أبوظبي الإعلامي (@admediaoffice) [December 26, 2021](#)

"Entry to social events requires adherence to existing precautionary measures, including showing green pass on Alhosn app, presenting a negative PCR test result received within 48 hours, and wearing masks while observing physical distancing protocol," the new guidelines say.

The committee said it will increase inspection and monitoring tours to ensure all preventive and precautionary measures are being implemented and urged those eligible to receive a booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and maintain green status on Alhosn app through regular PCR testing.



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## [French arrest man over chemical weapons parts in Syria](#)

Author:

AFP

ID:

1640552676654166900

Sun, 2021-12-26 00:07

PARIS: A French-Syrian man has been detained by French police on suspicion of

supplying components for the manufacture of chemical weapons in Syria through his shipping company, sources briefed on the case told AFP Sunday.

The man, who was born in 1962 and lives abroad, was arrested Saturday in the south of France according to one of the sources.

He has been held on suspicion of “conspiracy to commit crimes against humanity, accessory to crimes against humanity and accessory to war crimes,” a judicial source told AFP.

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

Syria denies the use of chemical weapons. It insists it handed over its weapons stockpiles under a 2013 agreement with the US and Russia, prompted by a suspected sarin gas attack that killed 1,400 in the Damascus suburb of Ghouta.

But Syria was stripped of its Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) voting rights in April after a probe blamed it for further poison gas attacks.

It will remain suspended until it has fully declared its chemical weapons and weapons-making facilities.



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Israeli official says Syria must not have chemical weapons

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# First omicron coronavirus case detected in Gaza Strip

Author:

Sun, 2021-12-26 23:43

GAZA: The Palestinian Health Ministry said on Sunday it had identified the first case of the omicron coronavirus variant in the Gaza Strip.

The carrier is a Gaza resident who was infected within the coastal territory, ministry official Majdi Dhair told a news conference.

Dhair said this meant the variant, first identified in southern Africa and Hong Kong last month, existed in Gaza and was now spreading among the population.

The discovery poses a new challenge to the enclave's under-developed health system.

"We are ahead of difficult days. It is expected that the omicron variant will spread fast," he told reporters.

Gaza, with a population of 2.2 million people, has registered 189,837 COVID-19 infections and 1,691 deaths.

Dhair urged Gazans to get vaccinated, putting the percentage of those who had already received shots at around 40 percent.

In the Israeli-occupied West Bank, three cases of omicron variant had been detected among Palestinians on Dec. 16 and the number had since risen to 23 among the 3.1 million population, Palestinian health authorities said.

In a separate development, Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett went into isolation at home after his 14-year-old daughter tested positive for the coronavirus, his office said.

Bennett awaits the results of a COVID-19 PCR test.

Bennett left the weekly meeting of his Cabinet and headed home after learning of his daughter's positive test, which came amid fast-spreading infections in Israel caused by the omicron variant.

The premier's daughter had been vaccinated against COVID-19, his office said. It did not disclose whether she had been infected by omicron or the delta variant also prevalent in Israel.

Before the Cabinet session began, Bennett, who had a vaccine booster shot on Aug. 20, and other members of his government took rapid antigen tests and received negative results.

Bennett drew public criticism after his wife and children went on holiday abroad early this month, despite his calls for Israelis to help stem Omicron's spread by cancelling plans to fly overseas.



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## [Somali President, PM trade accusations over delays to ongoing elections](#)

Author:

Reuters

ID:

1640550945403728000

Sun, 2021-12-26 23:37

MOGADISHU: Somalia's president and prime minister each accused the other on Sunday of holding up ongoing parliamentary elections, in a spat analysts say may distract the government from its fight against the Al-Qaeda-linked insurgency Al-Shabab.

Parliamentary elections began on Nov. 1 and were supposed to be completed by Dec. 24, but one newly elected lawmaker said that as of Saturday only 24 of

275 representatives had been elected.

"The Prime Minister is posing a serious threat to the electoral process and overstepping his mandate," the office of President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed said in a statement on Sunday.

Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble's office later put out its own statement saying the president had spent "so much time, energy and finances in frustrating the national elections" and was "derailing the electoral process."

The United States late on Sunday called for a credible and rapid conclusion to the elections.

"The United States is deeply concerned by the continuing delays and by the procedural irregularities that have undermined the credibility of the process," the US State Department said.

Newly elected parliamentarian Mohamed Sheikh Mursal said only 24 lawmakers had been confirmed as elected as of Saturday, one day after the process had been due to be completed.

Under Somalia's complex indirect electoral process, regional councils are meant to choose a senate. Clan elders are then meant to pick members of the lower house, which then picks a new president at a date not yet fixed.

In April, factions of the security forces allied to Mohamed and Roble seized areas of the capital, as the prime minister and opposition both opposed a move to extend the president's four-year term by another two years.

Clashes between the two groups forced

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/bowing-pressure-somalias-president-...>

between 60,000 and 100,000 people to flee their homes.

The confrontation was resolved when the president put Roble in charge of security and of organizing the delayed elections.

Roble's Sunday statement said he would hold meetings on Monday to find ways to speed up the election.

President Mohamed's office also said he would hold a separate meeting on the elections and "agreeing on a capable leadership to spearhead timely, and transparent elections" without offering more details on how long the process might take.

Somalia, which has had only limited central government since 1991, is trying to reconstruct itself with the help of the United Nations. It had intended to hold its first direct elections in more than three decades this year in a rare victory against chronic instability in the country.



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## [Arab coalition conducts air raids on Houthi targets across Yemen](#)

Sun, 2021-12-26 22:31

AL-MUKALLA: The Arab coalition supporting the Yemeni government carried out new airstrikes on Sunday, targeting a military camp in Houthi-held Sanaa and rebel reinforcements in Marib Governorate.

The coalition said in a statement on Sunday that it destroyed weapon depots at a military camp controlled by the Houthis, urging residents not to pass

through or congregate near targeted military sites in Sanaa.

Residents in Sanaa reported hearing large explosions as images on social media showed smoke billowing from the targeted sites.

On Saturday, the coalition launched a large-scale military operation against the Houthis in Yemen, shortly after a missile fired by the militia killed two civilians in Saudi Arabia's Jazan.

The coalition vowed to punish the Houthis for targeting civilians in Yemen and across the border in the Kingdom.

At the same time, local media reported on Sunday that the latest airstrikes by the coalition in have prompted the Houthis into replacing officials and arresting members on suspicion of being coalition spies.

Quoting a source close to the Houthi movement's Supreme Council, Al-Sahil Al-Gharbi, a news site affiliated with Yemen's former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, reported that the militia was taken aback by the coalition air raids on their command rooms, secret military sites and officials.

The movement accused guards of sending key coordinates to the coalition and subsequently changed security and intelligence protocols, including residences, guards, communications and meeting times, the news site said.

On the ground, coalition jets struck Houthi military gatherings and vehicles in the province of Marib, where government forces are battling aggressive rebel attacks, Abdu Abdullah Majili, a Yemeni army spokesperson, told Arab News on Sunday.

The airstrikes thwarted Houthi attempts to reinforce their dwindling forces in Marib and paved the way for government forces to retake territory, Majili said.

Dozens of combatants were killed in heavy fighting between government troops and the Houthis over the past 24 hours in sites south of Marib, as the Houthis continuously attacked government loyalists.

Majili said that the latest fierce fighting occurred around the Al-Balaq Al-Sharqi mountain range on the southern edges of the city.

Thousands of combatants and civilians have been killed since February when the Houthis renewed a major military offensive to capture the energy-rich city of Marib, the government's last bastion in the north.

Also in Marib, government officials and local human rights activists strongly condemned a Houthi missile strike on a petrol station in Marib that claimed the lives of three civilians.

A missile fired by the Houthis on Saturday exploded inside a compound of buildings, an oil station and an automobile repair shop in Marib city, killing three civilians, including a child, and wounding eight more.

Two more missiles fired by the militia also hit other locations in the densely populated city over the past two days.

Muammar Al-Eryani, Yemen minister of information, culture and tourism, tweeted that the Houthis intensified missile attacks on residential areas in Marib after failing to make military gains on the fronts outside the city.

“The targeting of residential areas in Marib using three Iranian-made ballistic missiles is a hysterical and cowardly act. It reveals the scale of losses the Houthis have incurred on fronts and its indifference to the fate of millions of residents in the city,” he said.

Separately, Yemen President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi on Saturday appointed Awadh Mohammed Al-Wazer Al-Awlaki, an influential tribal leader, an MP and a member of the General People’s Congress party, as new governor of the oil-rich province of Shabwa, replacing Mohammed Saleh bin Adeo, who was named as a presidential adviser.



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Arab coalition launches airstrikes on military targets in Yemen’s Sanaa