

# Tens of thousands protest Sudan's coup, 3 protesters killed

Sun, 2021-10-31 02:21

CAIRO: Tens of thousands of Sudanese took to the streets across the country Saturday, in the largest pro-democracy protest yet since the military seized control earlier this week.

Three protesters were killed and dozens injured – several by live rounds – as security forces opened fire in several locations, a doctors' union said.

The coup, condemned by the international community, has threatened to derail Sudan's fitful transition to democracy, which began after the 2019 ouster of long-time autocrat Omar Al-Bashir. Since then, the military and civilian leaders have governed in an uneasy partnership.

Pro-democracy groups had called for protests across the country Saturday to demand the re-instating of a deposed transitional government and the release of senior political figures from detention.

The United States and the United Nations had warned Sudan's strongman, Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, that they view the military's treatment of the protesters as a test, and called for restraint.

Burhan has claimed that the transition to democracy would continue despite the military takeover, saying he would install a new technocrat government soon. But the pro-democracy movement in Sudan fears the military has no intention of easing its grip, and will appoint politicians it can control. Saturday's large turnout is bound to increase pressure on the generals who face condemnations from the US and other Western countries to restore a civilian-led government.

Crowds began to gather Saturday afternoon in the capital of Khartoum and its twin city Omdurman. Marchers chanted "Give it up, Burhan," and "revolution, revolution." Some held up banners reading, "Going backward is impossible." The demonstrations were called by the Sudanese Professionals' Association and the so-called Resistance Committees. Both were at the forefront of an uprising that toppled longtime autocrat Omar Al-Bashir and his Islamist government in 2019. They are also calling for the dismantling of paramilitary groups and restructuring of the military, intelligence and security agencies. All three protesters killed Saturday were shot in Omdurman. One was shot in his head, another in his stomach, and a third in his chest, the Sudan Doctors Committee and protesters said.

The committee, which is part of the Sudanese Professionals' Association, said security forces had used live ammunition against protesters in Omdurman and nearby. It said it counted more than 110 people wounded, some with gunshots, in Khartoum, Omdurman and the eastern province of Al-Qadarif.

Sudanese police denied using live ammunition and said in a statement that a policeman was wounded by gunfire. They said they used tear gas to disperse groups of demonstrators who allegedly attacked their forces and "important positions." The statement did not elaborate.

Elsewhere, security forces fired tear gas at protesters as they attempted to cross the Manshia Bridge over the Nile River to reach Khartoum's downtown, said Mohammed Yousef Al-Mustafa, a spokesman for the professionals'

association.

"No power-sharing mediation with the military council again," he said, marching at an area protest.

Anti-coup protests also erupted in other areas, including the Red Sea city of Port Sudan, Kassala in eastern Sudan, and Obeid, in North Kordofan province, according to activists.

As night fell, plain clothes security forces chased off protesters in Khartoum and Omdurman, to prevent them from setting up sit-ins, activists said. In some neighborhoods, protesters blocked roads with makeshift barricades.

Earlier on Saturday, security forces blocked major roads and bridges linking Khartoum's neighborhoods. Security was tight downtown and outside the military's headquarters, the site of a major sit-in during the 2019 uprising. Since the military takeover, street protests have been daily. With Saturday's fatal shootings, the overall number of people killed by security forces since the coup rose to 12, according to the Sudan Doctors' Committee and activists. More than 280 others were wounded. Troops have fired live ammunition, rubber bullets and tear gas at anti-coup demonstrators, and beat protesters with sticks in recent days.

Meanwhile, talks are ongoing to try to mitigate the crisis.

Late Friday, the UN special envoy for Sudan, Volker Perthes, met with Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, a coup leader seen as close to Burhan. Dagalo commands the feared Rapid Support Forces, a paramilitary unit that controls the streets of Khartoum and played a major role in the coup.

He said the UN's transition mission for Sudan is facilitating dialogue between the top generals and civilian leaders. Perthes said this "remains the only path toward a peaceful solution to the current crisis."

A Sudanese military official said Saturday that a UN-supported national committee began separate meetings with Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok and Burhan to find common ground.

The official said Hamdok demanded the release of all government officials and political figures arrested since the coup. Burhan, the official said, gave an initial approval to release "most" of the detained, but rejected the release of others, including Khalid Omar, the minister of Cabinet Affairs, saying they face accusations of inciting troops to rebellion.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity as he wasn't authorized to release the information.

Meanwhile, the UN said it is closely monitoring security forces' response on Saturday.

"They will be held individually accountable for any excessive use of force against protesters," said Clément Nyaletsossi Voule, the UN special rapporteur on the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

Burhan has claimed that the takeover was necessary to prevent a civil war, citing what he said were growing divisions among political groups. However, the takeover came less than a month before he was to have handed some power to a civilian.

Burhan installed himself as head of a military council that he said will rule Sudan until elections in July 2023. Observers say it's doubtful the military will allow a full transition to civilian rule, if only to block civilian oversight of the military's large financial holdings.





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[Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan](#)

[Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo](#)

Sudan braces for 'million-strong' march against bloody coup  
Sudan coup leader says technocrat will lead new government, ousted PM could return

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## [UN urges talks on Western Sahara after cease-fire breakdown](#)

Author:

Sun, 2021-10-31 00:07

NEW YORK: The UN Security Council extended the UN peacekeeping mission in disputed Western Sahara for a year on Friday, expressing concern at the breakdown of the 1991 cease-fire between Morocco and the pro-independence Polisario Front and calling for a revival of UN-led negotiations.

The vote was 13-0 with Russia and Tunisia abstaining.

The US-drafted resolution makes no mention of US backing for Morocco's claim to the mineral-rich territory in the waning days of the Trump administration

as part of efforts to get Morocco to recognize Israel.

Morocco annexed Western Sahara, a former Spanish colony believed to have considerable offshore oil deposits and mineral resources, in 1975, sparking a conflict with the Polisario Front.

The UN-brokered the 1991 cease-fire and established a peacekeeping mission to monitor the truce and help prepare a referendum on the territory's future that has never taken place because of disagreements on who is eligible to vote.

The Front ended the 29-year cease-fire with Morocco last November and resumed its armed struggle following a border confrontation with Morocco which continues today.

The Moroccan military had launched an operation that month in the UN-patrolled Guerguerat border zone to clear a key road it said had been blockaded for weeks by Polisario supporters.

Morocco has proposed wide-ranging autonomy for Western Sahara.

But the Polisario Front insists the local population, which it estimates at 350,000 to 500,000, has the right to a referendum.



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Sahara tension: Moroccan row deepens with Germany Morocco, Algeria clash at UN General Assembly over Western Sahara

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## Lebanon's FM sees possible breakthrough in diplomatic spat sparked by pro-Houthi minister

Sat, 2021-10-30 23:54

BEIRUT: Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdullah Bou Habib on Saturday expressed optimism that the diplomatic crisis triggered by the country's information minister would soon be resolved.

George Kordahi's statement – that Yemen's Houthis were only defending themselves – did not sit well with Saudi Arabia as well as Yemen's legitimate government and their allies, who have been fighting the Iran-backed militia since 2015.

The militia seized Yemen's capital, Sanaa, and other provinces from the UN-recognized government in 2014, prompting Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries to organize a coalition to contain the threat. Since then, the Houthis had been launching ballistic missiles, rockets and armed drones against civilian targets in Saudi Arabia.

As the Iran-backed Hezbollah movement came to Kordahi's defense, the crisis worsened on Saturday, with [Kuwait, Bahrain and the UAE recalling their ambassadors from Lebanon](#) in solidarity with Saudi Arabia. They also ordered Lebanon's ambassadors to leave their countries within 48 hours.

Habib's committee, tasked by Prime Minister Najib Mikati to resolve the crisis, failed to reach a way out of the scandal during the closed meeting it held on Saturday apparently due to objections by the Marada Movement, to which Kordahi is affiliated.

Richard Michaels, deputy head of the US mission in Lebanon, joined the meeting at Bou Habib's request but left the meeting half an hour later.

Mikati had asked Kordahi to resign on Friday night, but Marada Movement head Suleiman Frangieh objected.

"If I were to serve my personal and political interest, I would encourage Kordahi to resign as he has offered to submit his resignation at the Baabda Palace and in the Maronite Patriarchate, but I refused because my conscience does not allow me to ask this of a minister who did not make a mistake, but simply gave his opinion in a free country before he was appointed," he said.

Frangieh added: "We have a firm conviction of wanting excellent relations with the Arab countries. Our position regarding Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and other Gulf countries is clear."

He refused to "sacrifice" Kordahi for anyone, saying that if the minister were to resign or be fired then the movement would not name a replacement.

Nonetheless, Habib mentioned a possible breakthrough in the coming hours. He also pointed to the participation of the US in resolving the crisis.

"I was the one who invited the American diplomat to join the meeting because the Americans can help in asking Saudi Arabia to find a way out," he said.

Habib dismissed Frangieh's comments as "political opinions that have nothing to do with our meeting, and we are working technically to solve the crisis."

US State Department spokesman Samuel Warberg told the Lebanese Al-Jadeed TV station: "The US urges the Arab countries, especially Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and countries in the region to communicate with the Lebanese government.

He said the US government was working with the international community to secure support for the Lebanese government. "We are waiting to see transparency and accountability on the government's part," he added.

### **'Adding fuel to the fire'**

[Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit](#) expressed his "deep concern and regret over the rapid deterioration in Lebanese-Gulf relations, especially at a time when efforts were made to restore positive ties to help Lebanon overcome the challenges it is facing."

He said the Lebanese should have handled the crisis caused by Kordahi's comments "more carefully, instead of adding fuel to the fire."

Lebanese officials have tried to contain the diplomatic crisis, amid Hezbollah's insistence that Kordahi should not resign under the pretext of "preserving Lebanese sovereignty and national dignity," according to a party statement. This position was reiterated by a number of Hezbollah MPs on Saturday.

"Hezbollah and the Amal movement could make their ministers resign from the government if Kordahi were to do so," the Al Markazia news agency reported.

Former Lebanese Prime Ministers Fouad Siniora, Saad Hariri and Tammam Salam denounced "Kordahi's positions that violate the Arab, diplomatic and moral principles and norms."

They demanded that he immediately submit his resignation, as his ministerial position now posed "a threat to Lebanese-Arab relations and to Lebanon's interest."

They stressed the policy of disassociation they had adopted and warned against “joining the axis led by Iran in the region.”

They said Hezbollah had been interfering and playing a destructive role since its involvement in Arab crises and wars, not to mention its involvement in the Yemen war waged by Iran against Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states.

Hariri criticized “the reckless ideas in the name of sovereignty that lead Lebanon to an unprecedented Arab isolation, the price of which the Lebanese people are paying.”

He said: “The responsibility, first and foremost, in this regard lies with Hezbollah, and its professed hostility toward the Arabs and the Arab Gulf states.”

Hariri said: “You want a state with sovereignty and national dignity, so remove Iran’s wing from Lebanon, put an end to arrogant policies and stop threatening the Lebanese with an army that outnumbers the state’s army and its security and military institutions.”

### **Hezbollah rules**

Kataeb Party head Samy Gemayel believed Kordahi’s comments were “proof” of how the country’s political forces had “surrendered” to Hezbollah, allowing it to take over the presidency, government and parliament.

The diplomatic crisis between Lebanon and the Arab Gulf states coincides with one related to Lebanese exports to the Gulf, following the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs saying the Kingdom had banned all Lebanese imports.

According to statistics from the Lebanese Association of Agriculture, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries import 173,300 tons or 55.4 percent of Lebanon’s total exports of vegetables and fruits.

This means Lebanon will lose \$92 million annually under this ban, which is the equivalent of \$250,000 per day.

Lebanese economic bodies have criticized “the misfortunes that unexpectedly come upon Lebanon, at a time when the Lebanese are suffering in various aspects of their lives and were waiting for an initiative from the government to pull Lebanon out of the gutter, not ruin Lebanese relations with the Gulf states that have constituted a strategic economic lever for Lebanon over the years.”



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Arab League expresses concern over deterioration of Lebanese-Gulf relations  
Saudi foreign minister says crisis with Lebanon has its origins in Hezbollah dominance

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## [Four children killed in Houthi mortar strike in Yemen](#)

Sat, 2021-10-30 19:38

AL-MUKALLA: Four children were killed and two more wounded when a mortar shell fired by the Iran-backed Houthis on Saturday struck a residential area in the city of Taiz, in southern Yemen, residents said.

The six children, belonging to the same family, were playing in front of their house when the shell exploded, Ahmed Mansour, a local medic, told Arab News by telephone.

Residents said the targeted area is not close to the battlefields or military bases under the government's control, adding that the shell was fired from a Houthi-controlled base east of Taiz.

The shelling is the latest in a series of deadly strikes by the Houthis on residential areas in Taiz that have killed dozens of civilians.

The attack came as local authorities in the central province of Marib announced that the death toll from the Houthi missile strike on the house of a tribal leader in Marib's Juba district on Thursday evening had risen to 13 civilians. The bodies of seven unidentified civilians have been retrieved from the debris of the house.

The tribal leader, Abdul Latif Al-Qibli Namran, who survived the attack, vowed to fight off the Houthi attacks in Marib province till they are defeated. "We will fight as long as we breathe till victory is achieved," he said.

Yemen's Prime Minister Maen Abdul Malik Saeed, who called Namran to offer his condolences, strongly condemned the Houthi attacks and vowed to make the Houthi militia "pay the price for crimes against civilians and the displaced," the official news agency SABA said.

Juba has a large concentration of internally displaced people who fled fighting or Houthi repression.

As fighting between the government troops and the Houthis intensified in the

district, local aid organizations and officials warned of a big humanitarian crisis as a large number of families are trapped with limited humanitarian assistance.

Local officials said on Saturday that the Houthi had intensified missile and mortar strikes on government-controlled areas in Juba to pave the way for their ground forces to advance.

Separately, the US special envoy for Yemen, Timothy Lenderking, on Saturday accused the Houthi of obstructing peace efforts to end the war and fueling the humanitarian crisis.

“Houthi escalation in Marib is not just an obstacle to peace, it is exacerbating a humanitarian situation already on the brink,” Lenderking said while discussing humanitarian crisis in Yemen with NGOs, according to the US State Department’s Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs.



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Arab coalition says 95 Houthis killed in strikes on Juba and Al-Kasarah  
More than 85 Houthis killed near Yemen’s Marib: Arab coalition

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## Children among 12 killed in Yemen car blast

Sat, 2021-10-30 18:38

ADEN: At least 12 civilians, including children, were killed Saturday in a car bomb blast near the airport of Aden, the Yemeni government's interim capital, security officials said.

"Twelve civilians were killed in an explosion" in the vicinity of Aden airport and "there are also serious injuries," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Another security official confirmed the toll.

A spokesman from the Southern Transitional Council (STC) – part of Yemen's government – said the blast was caused by a car bomb explosion.

"A car bomb was detonated, killing a number of our peaceful citizens, including children, and wounding a number of other civilians," STC spokesman Ali Al-Kathiri said in a statement.

The explosion comes almost three weeks after six people were killed in a car-bomb attack that targeted Aden's governor, who survived.

AFP footage on Saturday showed people pulling out a body from a vehicle that had been completely destroyed, as firefighters put out flames nearby.

The internationally recognized government relocated to Aden from the capital Sanaa in 2014, forced out by the Houthis, who are fighting Yemeni government loyalists.

An Arab military coalition intervened in Yemen's war in 2015.

No one has yet claimed responsibility for Saturday's blast, which is the deadliest in the area since December last year, when an attack targeting cabinet members ripped through Aden's airport.

At least 26 people, including three members of the International Committee of the Red Cross, were killed and scores were wounded when explosions rocked the airport at the time, as ministers disembarked from an aircraft.

All cabinet members were reported to be unharmed, in what some ministers charged was a Houthi attack.



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Yemen army deploys three brigades in Marib to counter Houthi attacks  
Saudi aid agency carries out health projects in Yemen