

Attempts to destroy Egypt were thwarted, says president

Author:

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CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi said attempts to destroy the country had been thwarted.

In a speech at an event on Saturday, El-Sisi said that this outcome was thanks to the Egyptian people who had "confronted attempts to sabotage the country."

"We were expected to reach the stage of ruin and fight amongst each other," he told the audience.

"Those who were fighting us did not know that they were a tool for destroying the country, and the Egyptians were the ones who confronted these with their sons who were martyred in defense of the homeland, and contributed to the process of correction and change."

He addressed the people present and said: "Through you, I salute the whole Egyptian people.

"I am always frank and honest, and I speak according to my understanding and knowledge and to the honesty that I need to talk to people."

He said there was a need to rearrange and distribute the package of support measures provided to people in light of the state's orientation toward development and progress.

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President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi

The value of annual support measures was more than EGP275 billion (\$17.5 billion) and such support would reach around EGP3 trillion within 10 years, he added.

"I am addressing issues that no one has addressed. I am taking the difficult path and not the easy one. The government is working with the aim of developing the state."

He stressed that any state official was required to make the greatest effort to change the current situation.

He also said that the development of the Egyptian countryside would cost the state from EGP700 billion to EGP800 billion in three years.



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[Houthi court adjourns trial of abducted model due to absent judge](#)

Sun, 2021-08-15 23:42

ALEXANDRIA: A Houthi-controlled court on Sunday adjourned the trial of an abducted model and her colleague because a judge was absent, a legal source told Arab News.

During Sunday's hearing, the judge was supposed to decide on whether to accept or reject the defense and legal arguments from the model's lawyer.

"The women were brought to the court for trial, but unfortunately Judge Osama

Al-Junaid did not come and the court decided to adjourn the trial to Sunday," the lawyer said, referring to Entesar Al-Hammadi and her colleague.

The model's defense attorney is demanding her release on bail.

Since her abduction from a Sanaa street in February, 20-year old Al-Hammadi has faced charges of violating Islamic dress codes, trading in drugs and being involved in prostitution.

She has denied all the charges and accused the Houthis of punishing her for refusing to work with them.

The Houthis refused her request and ignored international calls to free her, instead putting her in solitary confinement in a special ward for "prostitutes," a move that pushed her into trying to take her own life.

The Houthis banned her lawyer Khaled Mohammed Al-Kamal from speaking to local or international media outlets and also replaced a prosecutor who had ordered her release.

Citing the judge's previous verdicts, lawyers following the case described him as a hardliner who might hand down a lengthy prison sentence for Al-Hammadi.

FASTFACT

Entesar Al-Hammadi has denied all the charges and accused the Houthis of punishing her for refusing to work with them.

"Judge Osama Al-Junaid is a hardliner and loyal to the Houthi militia. A very short time ago, he ordered a man's hand to be cut off for stealing," the legal source said.

In a separate case, the Houthi-run Supreme Court on Saturday overturned two sentences, including the death penalty, against Asmaa Al-Omeissy, a mother of two who was abducted by the militia on spying charges.

Her lawyer Abdul Majed Sabra told Arab News that the Supreme Court repealed two previous rulings by the Specialized Criminal Appeals Division after accepting his appeal and ordered the same court to urgently review the case.

Amnesty International said the Houthis had arrested Al-Omeissy at a checkpoint in Oct. 2016 and later accused her of colluding with the Arab coalition. In Sanaa, the Houthis summoned her father and subjected both of them to torture.

"Their arrest marked the beginning of a horrific ordeal including enforced disappearance, torture and other ill-treatment, and death sentences following a grossly unfair trial," the rights group said.

The court first sentenced Al-Omeissy to death but later reduced this to 15

years in prison.

Rights groups have condemned the Houthis for using judicial bodies under their control to punish their opponents, adding that the militia were not serious about releasing abducted women.

Majed Fadhail, deputy minister of human rights, said Sunday that the Houthis would not release the model and were using the courts to justify their actions against her.

“Those mock trials are illegal,” he told Arab News. “The Houthis are using the courts for political purposes.”

Her trial comes as the Houthis intensify their morality crackdown in areas under their control.

Residents told Arab News that the group has banned singers from weddings and outdoor gatherings and ordered people to replace songs with religious chants or folk songs known locally as zawamel.

Earlier this month, a checkpoint manned by the Houthis in the western province of Hodeidah detained Yemeni singer Fuad Al-Kibsi for eight hours and confiscated his belongings, criticizing him for violating their ban on singing.



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US Navy commander visits largest base in Egypt

Author:

Sun, 2021-08-15 23:36

CAIRO: The commander of the US Naval Forces Central Command, Lt. Gen. Charles Cooper, visited the Egyptian Berenice Military Base alongside Washington's Ambassador to Egypt Jonathan Cohen.

The site is the largest air and naval base in both the Middle East and the Red Sea region, located east of Aswan near the country's southern border.

The US delegation inspected Berenice's facilities for use by both the Egyptian Navy and units belonging to allied nations, and praised its geographic location, close to sea transportation lines, said Egyptian military spokesman Col. Gharib Abdel Hafez Gharib.

Lt. Gen. Ahmed Khaled, commander of the Egyptian Navy, received Lt. Gen. Cooper and Ambassador Cohen at the base "within the well-established strategic relations between Egypt and the US," the spokesman added.

The meeting coincided with the visit of US warship USS Monterey to the base – a Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser, and one of the oldest and largest US navy units. The visit was the first major naval activity at the base since its inception.



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[Palestinians protest Israeli 'violation' of Hebron heritage site](#)

Sun, 2021-08-15 22:39

AMMAN: Protests against Israeli plans to construct near Hebron's Ibrahimi Mosque have escalated after Israeli army-protected contractors worked on the mosque in order to install a nearby electric elevator.

Palestinian members of the Israeli Knesset made a supportive visit to Hebron on Saturday and vowed to back Palestinian efforts to preserve the UNESCO-protected heritage site.

UNESCO, the UN cultural organization, declared the ancient and hotly contested core of Hebron in the Israel-occupied West Bank as "in danger,"

despite a concerted diplomatic effort by Israel and the US to change the verdict.

Knesset Member Sami Abu Shehadeh told Arab News that a delegation of the Joint Arab List was hosted by the city's mayor, waqf officials, as well as the Chamber of Commerce.

"The changes that they are trying to carry out near the mosque are illegal and racist," he said.

He added that Israelis were claiming that the changes are to help the disabled.

"But even this so-called benevolent act is not available to disabled Palestinians because it is being created in an area that is restricted only to Jewish settlers."

Abu Shehadeh and others experienced for themselves the difficulties that normal Palestinian worshipers face in reaching their own mosque.

"Even as members of the Knesset – who cannot be disrupted by the army – we had a hard time crossing so many checkpoints. Imagine what it is like for ordinary Palestinians," he said.

Even as members of the Knesset – who cannot be disrupted by the army – we had a hard time crossing so many checkpoints. Imagine what it is like for ordinary Palestinians.

Sami Abu Shehadeh

Abu Shehadeh added that what he saw in a single square kilometer was "the ugliest site of the Israeli settlement racist enterprise."

The delegation of the Joint Arab List was stopped on Hebron's Shuhada Street, which has been closed since 1994, causing business losses to the tune of \$1.2 billion for 1,800 Palestinian shops in the heart of the old city.

But on a positive note, Abu Shehadeh said that the delegation was "pleasantly surprised" to see many Palestinian citizens of Israel from Al-Fahm and Jaffa, who had come to show solidarity.

Dana Mills, director of development and external affairs at Peace Now, told Arab News that the issue of the mosque is "not a matter of accessibility," but rather a "performance of sovereignty."

Through the "excuse of accessibility," Mills said that Israel was constructing an elevator and a bridge at one of the holiest sites in both Islam and Judaism.

Mills added that improving accessibility requirements "should have been done with full coordination and the consent of the Muslim waqf."

"It is still not too late to stop this project and we call upon the Israeli government to immediately end the work."

On Friday, Palestinians unilaterally closed all mosques in the Hebron area and encouraged worshipers to visit the Ibrahimi Mosque in a peaceful act of protest.

But many who traveled to the holy site have claimed they were met with violence from the Israeli side.

Tareq Salmi, a spokesman of Islamic Jihad, said that Israeli actions are aimed at "having control of the mosque."

"The new plan of the settlement enterprise is to create a separate corridor and an electric elevator which will allow settlers to reach the roof of the mosque."

These actions are aimed at "changing the historic Islamic site which is part of Arab and Islamic heritage in the city of Hebron," Salmi said.

Salmi said that the 44th session of the World Heritage Sites meeting in Fuzhou, China, in July decided that "the status of Hebron old town on the endangered World Heritage list remains unchanged."

UNESCO deplored "the ongoing Israeli excavations which are illegal under international law and harmfully affect the authenticity and integrity of the site."

The organization also "took note of reports regarding new planned projects, including an electric elevator."



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[UAE and Egypt conclude joint air force exercises](#)

Sun, 2021-08-15 22:49

CAIRO: Egypt and the UAE have concluded their joint air force exercises, an Egyptian military spokesman said.

Zayed-3 included theoretical and practical sessions to unify concepts, improve skills, and coordinate the management of joint operations in various modern air combat methods, Col. Arkan Harb Gharib Abdel Hafez added.

Multi-role fighters from both sides carried out several joint exercises for training such as attacking enemy targets and defending vital targets in unison, as well as training in refueling in the air.

The military spokesman said the training demonstrated the "distinguished level and high professionalism reached by the coordination between the air forces of both countries."

The training is intended to enhance the forces' ability to manage joint air combat operations efficiently and competently.

On Aug. 2, the Egyptian Armed Forces announced that the air force had arrived at Al-Dhafra Air Base in the UAE to participate in the drills.

The training comes in light of strengthening relations between both countries' armed forces to maximize their capabilities in facing all risks and challenges that could compromise regional security and stability.



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