

Morocco to extend night curfew to limit COVID-19 surge

Author:

Mon, 2021-08-02 23:14

RABAT: Morocco will lengthen its night curfew, starting two hours earlier at 9 p.m. (2000 GMT) from Tuesday, as it tightens restrictions to counter a surge in coronavirus infections, the government said on Monday.

The business and tourist hubs of Casablanca, Agadir and Marakech will be closed except to holders of the vaccine pass or those on necessary travel, the government said in a statement.

The move is expected to hurt tourism business which pinned hopes on the summer season to attract national tourists after travel receipts dropped 70 percent in the first half this year.

Daily COVID-19 infections have oscillated between 4,000 and 9,000 over the past week as the total number of cases people rose to 569,452 cases, including 9,885 deaths.

However, Morocco has outpaced other African peers in its vaccine push, administering 24 million doses of the AstraZeneca and Sinopharm vaccines. Last week, the country started administering Johnson and Johnson doses after receiving a shipment of 300,000 jabs.



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From Morocco to Sudan, North Africa grapples with crippling new wave of COVID-19 Israel launches direct flights to Morocco

[Israel free to make decisions it deems appropriate on Iran: White House](#)

Mon, 2021-08-02 23:07

WASHINGTON D.C.: Israel was “free to make the decisions it deemed appropriate” on Iran after an attack on an Israeli-managed tanker off the coast of Oman last week which has been blamed on Tehran, a White House statement said on Monday.

The US, Britain and Israel have blamed Iran for the fatal attack on the Israeli-linked oil tanker. Iran denies involvement.

In Washington on Monday, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the US was “confident that Iran carried out this attack.”

He added that Iran’s steps posed a challenge and a threat in light of an unrestricted nuclear program.

Meanwhile, Israel’s defense minister also said Monday that Iran’s alleged attack on the ship was “a stepping-up of the escalation” of hostilities by Iran, and called for international action.

Benny Gantz addressed Israel’s parliament, the Knesset, and said the drone strike on the Mercer Street that left two crew members dead – one from the UK and one from Romania – was “in violation of international law and human morality.” He charged that Iran was behind at least five attacks on international shipping in the last year.

While no one has claimed responsibility for the attack, Iran and its militia allies have used so-called “suicide” drones in attacks previously. The region has seen a rise in attacks on commercial vessels in the aftermath of the disintegration of the Iran nuclear deal in 2018.

“This is exactly the reason why we must act now against Iran, which is not only striving toward nuclear arms, but is also bringing about a dangerous arms race and intends to destabilize the Middle East with terrorist militias who are armed with hundreds of drones in Iran, Yemen, Iraq and other countries in the region,” he said.

Gantz said that any future agreement between world powers and Iran to rein in its nuclear program must also address Iranian's "aggression in the region and harming both innocent people and to the global economy."

"This is not a future threat, rather a tangible and immediate danger," he said.

Blinken said the US was in close contact with the UK, Israel and Romania and "there will be a collective response." He did not elaborate on what that response might be.

"It follows a pattern of similar attacks by Iran, including past incidents with explosive drones," he told reporters at the State Department. "There is no justification for this attack on a peaceful vessel on a commercial mission, international waters rise action is a direct threat to freedom of navigation and commerce, took the lives of innocent sailors."

* *With AP*



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UK, Iran summon envoys after British slam 'unlawful' Oman tanker attack Israel

says it has evidence linking Iran to deadly tanker attack; Tehran denies

[Egypt, Algeria agree on 'full support' for Tunisian president](#)

Author:

Mon, 2021-08-02 22:03

CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi and Algerian Foreign Minister Ramtane Lamamra agreed to support embattled Tunisian leader Kais Saeid in a bid to maintain stability in the country.

The consensus was reached during a meeting in Cairo after the two sides discussed recent developments in the nearby country.

As a result of the meeting, El-Sisi agreed with Lamamra to “fully support” President Saied.

The announcement came in an official statement following the talks.

Both sides agreed to implement the “will and choices” of the Tunisian people in order to preserve the security of the North African country.

El-Sisi also affirmed Egypt’s keenness to develop relations with Algeria in various fields and boost cooperation, construction and development between the two countries.

He also reiterated his firm stance over Egypt’s “historical rights to the Nile waters” and the country’s position on maintaining its water security.

El-Sisi urged the importance of engaging in the negotiation process to reach a comprehensive and legally binding agreement on the rules for filling and operating the Renaissance Dam, according to a statement from the official spokesman for the presidency.

The statement said that the meeting of El-Sisi and Lamamra also focused on developments of common concern, especially the situation in Libya.

The two parties discussed political and security coordination and the exchange of information in regard to combating terrorism and extremist ideologies, which pose a threat to the entire region.



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Tunisia reiterates commitment to combating illegal migration
Tunisian president says in contact with 'friendly countries' to cut deficit

[Houthis accused of torturing prisoners to death in Yemen](#)

Author:

Mon, 2021-08-02 21:13

ALEXANDRIA: The Houthis have been accused of torturing hundreds of prisoners to death since taking power in late 2014.

Yemen's Human Rights Ministry said that 350 prisoners, including 33 women, had died from extreme torture and deliberate medical negligence during the last seven years. It added that the militia was still using the same harsh methods on prisoners in areas under their control.

Activists warned inmates were being subjected to human rights abuses in Houthi-controlled prisons and that they could die if the international

community did not intervene.

In a statement seen by Arab News, the ministry said it had documented 1,635 cases of mental and physical torture, deprivation of life-saving medical treatment and execution of prisoners in jails controlled by the Houthis in Sanaa, Hajjah, Tamar and other provinces.

The Mothers of Abductees Association, an umbrella organization for female relatives of war prisoners, said that its figures of the number of deaths inside Houthi prisons were close to the government's figures.

Amat Al-Salam Al-Hajj, the organization's chairwoman, told Arab News that 319 had died from torture inside Houthi prisons.

The ministry and rights groups said the latest confirmed victim of Houthi abuse was a prisoner called Mohsen Mohammed Al-Qadhi, who was reportedly executed inside a Tamar prison last week.

The ministry said he was abducted from his home in Dhamar city a year ago. Large bruises on his body indicated the physical torture he had been subjected to.

"This crime is an extension of a series of crimes and grave violations committed by the Houthi militia against the kidnapped and forcibly displaced men, women and children in their detention centers, who are subjected to the worst types of physical and psychological torture," the ministry said.

Local and international rights groups have demanded independent investigations into the deaths.

The Geneva-based SAM Organization for Rights and Liberties condemned the killing of Al-Qadhi and accused the militia of violating international laws by abusing prisoners.

It disputed the Houthis' claims that he had died from an unintentional shooting.

Rights Radar, a group established in the Netherlands by Yemeni activists, also called for an independent probe into his death.

Former prisoners and former officials at Houthi-controlled prisons told Arab News that prisoner abuse was rife, saying they had heard stories of many prisoners committing suicide to escape horrific treatment.

Essam Balghaith, a Yemeni journalist who was released from a Houthi jail during a prisoner swap, said torture was widespread and that many inmates tried to kill themselves as they could not bear torture.

"I heard about many cases of suicide attempts by prisoners due to extreme torture," he told Arab News. "I witnessed the death of a prisoner who was brutally tortured and deprived of medication."

Ahmed Arman, Yemen's minister of human rights, urged international rights

groups to expose Houthi crimes against prisoners and pressure the rebels to release them.

“The international community and international organizations that work in Yemen must be transparent about Houthi violations and crimes,” he told Arab News.



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Yemen violence increases as Houthis reject truce callsArab coalition intercepts drone launched by Houthis toward Saudi Arabia

[Israel's top court postpones making decision on eviction of Jerusalemites](#)

Author:

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Mon, 2021-08-02 20:10

AMMAN: The Israeli Supreme Court has postponed a ruling on the case of four

Palestinian families who are fighting eviction orders from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood.

The court held a hearing on the case of the Palestinian families facing expulsion by Israeli settlers in annexed east Jerusalem, an issue that was part of the start of the violent conflict in May.

Previous attempts by the court to make the families stay as protected tenants were rejected by the Palestinians through their lawyers.

A senior Palestinian government official intimately involved in the case told Arab News on condition of anonymity that the documents presented by the Jordanian government in recent days were a game-changer.

“The authenticated documents presented by the government of Jordan showing that the Palestinian homes were about to be registered when the 1967 war took place apparently complicated the attempts by the Israeli court to rule in favor of the Jewish settlers.

“Jordan’s latest documents were the game-changer in this case,” the source told Arab News.

They added: “It is very difficult now for the Israeli government to justify this ethnic cleansing of homes built by the Jordanian government in agreement with the UN for the Palestinians of Sheikh Jarrah.”

The decision late on Monday followed day-long protests outside the west Jerusalem court building,

Protesters raised signs in Arabic, English and Hebrew calling for “justice” to Sheikh Jarrah, demand an “end to the Israeli apartheid regime” and stating “we are not leaving our land.”

Jerusalem Orthodox Bishop Atallah Hanna told Arab News that the delay was made to keep the story quiet.

“It may take a month or two but the postponement does not mean cancellation of the eviction order. They might surprise us with something else at a later stage.”

Jamal Dajani, former director of communications in the office of the Palestinian prime minister, told Arab News that the postponement is due to the success of the daily demonstrations, international media, social media, and political pressure.

“The concern is that the Israeli authorities are just kicking the can down the road, waiting for the right moment ... to evict the Palestinian families. The pressure must continue and activists must remain vigilant.”

Dajani, an east Jerusalem resident, said that what is needed is a cancellation, not postponements.

“A fair and just ruling would be to cancel eviction orders – I’m afraid that

this is just a temporary band-aid.”

Sami Abu Shehadeh, a member of the Israeli Knesset, is the head of the Balad/Tajamu party. The member of the Israeli Parliament for the Joint List tweeted that any decision regarding Sheikh Jarrah must take into consideration that east Jerusalem is occupied, that settlements are war crimes and that Israeli laws negate restitution of pre-1948 Palestinian property.

Shehadeh, who is a Palestinian historian, said that the solution is simple: “Respect international law, end the occupation and achieve equal rights.”



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How East Jerusalem flashpoint Sheikh Jarrah got its own hashtag
Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood eviction appeal delayed