

President El-Sisi, Lebanese army chief discuss relations, cooperation

Author:

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CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi has affirmed his pride in the deep-rooted relations between Egypt and Lebanon and Egypt's interest in the safety, security and stability of Lebanon.

During his meeting with Joseph Aoun, commander of the Lebanese Army, President El-Sisi praised the primary role played by the army in maintaining stability in Lebanon, according to the official spokesperson's Facebook page.

The national armies represent the backbone of the cohesion and stability of countries, the president pointed out.

Aoun affirmed Lebanon's keenness to strengthen the strong historical relations between the two countries and expressed his country's appreciation for the Egyptian effort to support Lebanon, an extension of Egypt's pivotal role in maintaining stability in the entire Arab region.

Defense Minister Mohammed Zaki received Aoun to discuss the latest developments. The two officials discussed issues of common interest in light of current regional and international developments and ways of increasing military cooperation, according to a statement from the Egyptian Armed Forces.

Aoun also expressed his pride in the strong relations between the Egyptian and Lebanese armed forces, voicing his aspiration that the future would witness more cooperation and praising Egypt for developing its combat capabilities to maintain national security.

Aoun also met with Mohammed Farid, chief of staff of the Egyptian Armed Forces, to discuss similar issues.



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[Egyptian electricity minister heads to Russia to launch equipment manufacturing project for Dabaa nuclear plant](#)

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Thu, 2021-07-29 23:08

CAIRO: Egyptian Electricity and Renewable Energy Minister Mohammed Shaker headed to Russia to attend a joint celebration ceremony to begin

manufacturing the first long-term equipment for the Dabaa nuclear power plant.

A high-level technical delegation is accompanying the minister.

According to a statement, Shaker and Rosatom Director-General Alexey Likhachev are set to discuss the progress of the Dabaa nuclear power plant and its future work.

Russia's Rosatom is leading the Dabaa construction work.

The minister will also visit a group of Russian companies responsible for manufacturing long-term equipment for the nuclear plant.

The tour will cover Atomenergomash, which is responsible for manufacturing the compressor vessel, and Tagmash, which is responsible for manufacturing the reactor's core catcher.

The past period witnessed intense technical meetings at the Nuclear Power Plants Authority.

The talks resulted in agreements regarding the quality assurance program for the manufacturer and quality plans for the equipment, as part of preparations to start manufacturing the plant's long-term components.

The reactor's core catcher is distinctive for its advanced third-generation reactors, to which the reactors of the Dabaa nuclear plant belong.

All the technical stages of its manufacture are carried out within the Russian Federation.

Logistical executive measures will then be taken to transfer it to the Dabaa site.

The manufacture of the reactor core catcher is a major milestone in the implementation of the Dabaa nuclear plant and comes as part of a series of continuous achievements that the project has been witnessing recently as a result of the concerted efforts of the Egyptian and Russian technical teams.



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Egypt completes initial design phase of MisrSat-2 satellite

[Egypt completes initial design phase of MisrSat-2 satellite](#)

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CAIRO: Egypt's new satellite, MisrSat-2, is scheduled to launch in December 2022, just three months behind schedule despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the CEO of the Egyptian Space Agency (EgSA) said on Thursday.

Mohammed ElKoosy said the "first phase of the initial designs" had been completed and that the "engineering model" was currently being manufactured "with Chinese support."

The satellite was initially set to launch in September next year, but the timeline has been slightly altered because of the COVID-19 pandemic, he

explained.

The EgSA CEO also revealed that the satellite assembly center – located in Egyptian Space City near the New Administrative Capital – is close to completion. Egyptian Space City is due to open in March or April, he said.

Once the center is complete, assembly of MisrSat-2 will begin almost immediately, he said.

ElKoosy said Egypt's ambitious plans for its space industry are in line with the country's strategy for sustainable development. He cited the African Development Satellite – currently being manufactured by five African countries, with Egypt taking the lead – as an example. That satellite is designed to “measure the climate considerations of African countries, reducing their danger and controlling emissions rates.”



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to stop Marib offensive

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Thu, 2021-07-29 22:36

ALEXANDRIA: The Iran-backed Houthis have rebuffed the latest US call to stop their deadly military offensive on the central Yemeni city of Marib, accusing the Americans of supporting their opponents.

Houthi spokesman Mohammed Abdul-Salam lashed out at the US on Wednesday for calling for the offensive to cease, and for renewing support for the internationally recognized government, accusing Washington of fueling the war in Yemen and imposing a "blockade."

The latest Houthi statement was part of a series of criticisms of other countries and rights groups for rebuking them for refusing to stop military operations in the area, which have claimed the lives of thousands of combatants and civilians.

On Wednesday, the US special envoy for Yemen, Tim Lenderking, slammed the Houthis for attacking the city, warning that their offensive in the province would aggravate the already miserable humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

In a tweet sent by the US State Department's Near Eastern Affairs branch, Lenderking and Yemeni Prime Minister Maeen Abdul Malik "condemned the Houthi offensive on Marib for exacerbating humanitarian suffering and sacrificing Yemen's young men, and agreed on the need to restore political stability in southern Yemen."

The US envoy also echoed his concerns about the impact of the Houthi attacks on Marib during a meeting with the Acting UN Special Envoy for Yemen Muin Shreim.

The Yemeni government said on Thursday that it would keep resisting Houthi attempts to seize control of new areas whilst complying with peace efforts to end the war.

Speaking to a gathering of government officials in Yemen's Seiyun city on Thursday, Yemen's Parliament Speaker Sultan Al-Barkani stated that tens of thousands of Yemenis who fled Houthi repression and sought refuge in Marib would not allow the militia to capture the city.

"We will continue to seek peace, but at the same time, we will not abandon fighting," Al-Barkani said.

"The Houthis will not reach Marib. This is impossible for the Yemenis since Marib hosts hundreds of thousands (of people) who escaped from Houthi oppression and tyranny," said Al-Barkani.

The government's renewed pledges to defend Marib against Houthi incursions came as fighting raged on Thursday between government troops and the Houthis in several locations outside the city, near a military base in the west of the province and in mountainous areas and valleys in Rahabah to the south.

Yemen's Defense Ministry said on Wednesday that 11 Houthis were killed in the southern city of Taiz after an attack on government-controlled areas in the northwest were foiled.

In the western province of Hodeidah, a landmine planted by the Houthis killed three civilians and wounded 11 on Thursday in Al-Durihimi district, the Yemeni Landmine Monitor said.

Yemen's President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi on Thursday returned to the Saudi Arabian capital Riyadh from Cleveland, Ohio after a medical checkup, official news agency SABA said.

For almost a decade, Hadi has traveled frequently to the US to receive medical treatment for heart problems.



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Turkey accelerates security wall construction along Iranian border amid migrants' flow

Author:

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ANKARA: In a bid to stop the flow of migrants, Ankara has decided to expand the construction of a security wall along its border with Iran to cover the entirety of the 295-km frontier amid rising public discontent after an increased number of Afghan migrants entered the country from Iran.

The Turkish government has reportedly been pursuing its wall project since 2017.

So far, 149 km have been completed, spanning several border cities, including Agri, Hakkari, Iğdir and Van.

Over the recent weeks, thousands of Afghan migrants, as well as smugglers, have been increasingly using Turkey's eastern border province of Van to reach Europe, and authorities have now focused their attention on constructing the wall along this city.

"So far, only a 3.5-km section of the structure has been completed," said Van Gov. Mehmet Emin Bilmez.

More security measures, like watchtowers, wireless sensors and trenches, will also be installed across the length of the Iranian border after the rise in Afghan asylum-seekers fleeing the Taliban amid instability following the US withdrawal from Afghanistan. More soldiers have also been deployed for border checks.

Sixty-four km of the wall between Van and Iran are set to be completed by the end of the year.

In the past, Turkey has accused Iran of providing a safe harbor for the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) members inside its territory and for turning a blind eye to their illegal crossing and smuggling attempts from the land border.

The hi-tech security wall is also related to Turkey's cooperation with the EU to stifle immigration flows into EU countries under the 2016 EU-Turkey refugee deal. Brussels agreed last month to allocate €3.5 billion (\$4.2 billion) to help refugees in Turkey until 2023.

In a bid to halt new migration flows from Syria, Turkey has already built a land wall along its border with Syria, considered the world's third-longest wall after the Great Wall of China and the US-Mexico border wall.

Turkey hosts more than 4 million refugees, mostly Syrians, but Afghans

comprise the second-largest refugee population.

The new wave of migration from Afghanistan via Iran has triggered reactions from Turkish society's anti-refugee segments and sparked debate on the effectiveness of border security policies.

Ankara-based Research Center on Asylum and Migration President Metin Corabatir believes that building walls will not solve the problem of illegal immigration.

"It is a disincentive to a certain extent, but it is impossible to cover the entire 295-km border with Iran with walls, considering the physical characteristics of the region. People take all sorts of risks to reach Greece despite the border control mechanisms of the EU," he told Arab News.

From a humanitarian perspective and considering international refugee rights, Corabatir noted that it is not possible to deny people fleeing repressive regimes a sanctuary, although the international community asserts that they are mainly economic migrants seeking decent living standards.

"In addition to Afghans, Iranians fleeing from their regime, as well as Iraqis, are also attempting to cross the border from Van. We cannot push them back if they have a reasonable asylum request," he said.

"There is a need for controlled management and identification of those who are escaping security risks. We cannot close our doors to them," said Corabatir.

Although there are no official statistics regarding Afghan migrants in Turkey, the number is believed to be more than 500,000 with the recent flows, with hundreds more crossing the border each day.

Unlike Syrian refugees, most Afghans are mainly trying to reach European shores rather than settling in Turkey, a fact that concerns the EU.

"The Turkish government committed to improving conditions in the removal centers for refugees in its latest human rights action plan," Corabatir said.

"There are also plans to encourage the voluntary return of Afghan refugees by providing them with a certain amount of money to help them establish a life back in their home country," he added.

Turkish authorities caught over 25,000 Afghan migrants in the first half of this year. The situation is becoming more and more polarized, however, with leaders of the opposition parties urging the government to send them back to their country and blaming the government for "turning Turkey into an open prison for refugees."

Experts also note that ensuring the security of the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul is of key importance in order to be able to deliver humanitarian aid to the country and to prevent Taliban insurgents from expanding their zones of influence as US troops pull out.

Negotiations over Turkey's proposal to operate and secure the key international airport in Afghanistan continue.



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