

Israeli settlers leave West Bank outpost after govt deal

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Fri, 2021-07-02 13:32

BEITA, Palestinian Territories: Israeli settlers were leaving a West Bank wildcat outpost Friday in adherence to an agreement struck with nationalist premier Naftali Bennett's new government, an AFP reporter said.

The last cars were streaming out of Eviatar in compliance with the 4:00 p.m. (1300 GMT) deadline to leave the outpost.

Dozens of settler families several weeks ago started to build the settlement in defiance of both international and Israeli law, sparking fierce protests from Palestinians in nearby villages.

"I hope we'll be back here very soon," Sarah Lisson, a mother of six, told AFP before driving off. "We can build a big house."

The hilltop area where the settlers established a settlement of trailer homes, shacks and tents lies near Nablus in the northern West Bank, Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967.

Under the terms of the deal published by the Israeli government on Thursday, the settlers had to leave by Friday afternoon.

However, their temporary homes will remain, and the Israeli army will establish a presence in the area.

As settlers departed, soldiers were at the site, an AFP reporter said.

The defense ministry will then assess the area to possibly declare it as state land, where Israel allows settlers to build.

Should this happen, the military would then allow a community with a religious school to be built.

The Palestinians, who claim the land as their own, had harassed the settlers by burning car tires, sounding horns and pointing laser beams at them, leading to deadly clashes with Israeli security forces.

On Friday, Palestinians were again gathering across the valley to protest, hurling stones and burning tires.

The dispute around the flashpoint site put an early strain on Bennett's diverse eight-party coalition, that includes his right-wing nationalist Yamina party as well as left-wing groups and Arab-Israeli lawmakers.

The deal was rejected by leftwing Israeli groups, as well as the mayor of Beita, the nearby Palestinian village, who told AFP on Thursday that "clashes and protests will continue" as long as any Israeli "remains on our land."



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Israeli settlers agree to leave flashpoint West Bank outpost
Israeli gov't and settlers reach deal over West Bank outpost, Palestinians angered

[US drops sanctions on three Iranians, move unrelated to nuclear talks](#)

Fri, 2021-07-02 17:49

WASHINGTON: The US Treasury said on Friday it removed sanctions on three Iranians but said this did not reflect a change in its sanctions policy toward Iran and had nothing to do with talks on restoring US and Iranian compliance with the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

A Treasury spokesperson named the three as Behzad Ferdows, Mehrzad Ferdows, and Mohammad Reza Dezfulian, adding: "These delistings do not reflect any

change in US government sanctions policy toward Iran. They have nothing to do with ongoing (Iran nuclear deal) negotiations in Vienna.”

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Don't sacrifice Lebanon in pursuit of nuclear deal with Iran, analysts caution
Iran restricts IAEA access to main enrichment plant after attack, diplomats say

UAE confirms 1,663 new coronavirus cases, 6 deaths in last 24 hours

Fri, 2021-07-02 16:22

DUBAI: UAE health officials confirmed 1,663 new coronavirus cases and 6 fatalities overnight amid the country's continuing nationwide vaccination efforts.

The latest figures bring the country's caseload to 636,245 infections and 1,825 deaths since the pandemic began, state news agency WAM.

The Ministry of Health and Prevention also reported that an additional 1,638 individuals had fully recovered from COVID-19, bringing the total number of recoveries to 614,636.

Meanwhile, an additional 65,939 doses of the coronavirus vaccine have been administered during the past 24 hours.

The total number of doses provided up to today stands at 15,428,281 with a rate of vaccine distribution of 155.99 doses per 100 people, health officials said.

The UAE is among the world's leader when in terms of doses administered per 100 people. The country's National Emergency Crisis and Disaster Management Authority in May announced that it would be offering a third dose of China's Sinopharm vaccine.



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UAE approves emergency use of new COVID-19 treatment

[Syria Kurds seek help in rehabilitating Daesh-linked minors](#)

Author:

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1625231121032644400

Fri, 2021-07-02 11:57

BEIRUT: Syria's Kurds Friday urged international help to set up rehabilitation centers for minors linked to the Daesh group, after charges they were holding "hundreds of children" in adult prisons.

Acknowledging that some extremist-linked minors were being held in adult prisons, separate to the many more in camps, senior Kurdish foreign affairs official Abdelkarim Omar told AFP around 30 teenagers have lately been transferred out of one overcrowded camp.

He spoke just days after the International Committee of the Red Cross said “hundreds of children – mostly boys, some as young as 12 – are detained in adult prisons” in northeast Syria.

Kurdish authorities hold thousands of suspected extremist fighters in their jails, as well as tens of thousands of their relatives in camps for the displaced, after spearheading a US-backed battle against Daesh that formally ended in victory in early 2019.

Omar told AFP an unspecified number of Daesh-linked minors who are held in jails are kept in separate quarters to the adults.

He said the region desperately needed more rehabilitation centers for teenagers, on top of a single one already housing some 120 near the city of Qamishli.

“We think children do not belong in either camps or prisons,” he told AFP.

As a start, he said, “between 30 to 35 children aged 12 and older have been taken out of Al-Hol camp.”

The Kurds were preparing a new rehabilitation center in the city of Hasakah, which “will be ready in the coming days,” Omar added.

Since Kurdish-led fighters expelled Daesh from the last scrap of their territorial “caliphate” in March 2019, Al-Hol has swelled to a tent city of some 62,000 people – civilians but also alleged Daesh relatives.

The United Nations says it has documented “radicalization” in the camp, where the number of guards is limited and around 10,000 foreign Daesh-linked women and children lived in a separate annex.

Fabrizio Carboni, head of ICRC’s Middle East and Near East operations, on Wednesday described a “pervasive sense of hopelessness” in Al-Hol.

Boys lived “in a state of constant fear,” as “once they reach a certain age, many are separated from their families and transferred to adult places of detention,” he said in a statement.

He called for children in detention to be “either reunited with their families in camps, repatriated alongside them or have alternative care arrangements made for them.”

Omar, the Kurdish official, urged the international community to help it “set up 15 or 16 centers to bring the children out of the jails, until a solution is found.”

Keeping them in their current “environment will only lead to the emergence of

a new generation of terrorists,” he warned.



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Syria's Kurds call for international court to try Daesh militants
Syria's Kurds set free nearly 300 Daesh-linked Syrians

[Beirut blast judge to question top politicians, security officials](#)

Author:

Reuters

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1625228330922419300

Fri, 2021-07-02 15:25

BEIRUT: The judge in charge of the investigation into the Beirut port blast will seek to question top politicians and security officials, Lebanon's

national news agency said on Friday, almost a year after the explosion that devastated the capital.

The blast in August, blamed on a huge quantity of chemicals left for years in poor storage conditions, deepened a political and economic crisis in the heavily indebted country.

Ordinary Lebanese have grown increasingly angry that no senior officials have been held to account for the explosion that killed hundreds of people, injured thousands and ruined whole neighbourhoods in the centre of Beirut. Judge Tarek Bitar, who became the lead investigator into the blast after his predecessor was removed in February, will call in caretaker Prime Minister Hassan Diab and others, the agency said, although it said no dates had yet been set.

He has also written to parliament asking to lift immunity from former Finance Minister Ali Hassan Khalil, former Public Works Minister Ghazi Zeaiter and former Interior Minister Nohad Machnouk as a first step towards charging them.

Zeaiter, a parliamentary deputy from speaker Nabih Berri's bloc, and Khalil issued a statement later on Friday saying they would cooperate with the investigator to help determine those responsible for the blast, even before permission was issued. Machnouk declined to comment when contacted by Reuters. The caretaker prime minister and others listed as targets for questioning by the judge could not immediately be reached for comment.

Diab and the same ex-officials were charged last year by judge Fadi Sawan, who previously led the probe, but they refused to be questioned as suspects, accusing him of overstepping his powers.

Judge Bitar also asked for permission from caretaker Interior Minister Mohamed Fahmy to question Lebanon's security chief Abbas Ibrahim, the agency said.

Fahmy told Reuters he had not been notified yet about the process but would take all legal steps required once he was.

Bitar's list included another former public works minister, Youssef Finianos, and Tony Saliba, the head of state security.

Sawan was removed from the investigation in February by the court of cassation after a request by Khalil and Zeaiter, a major setback for the families of victims seeking justice.

Sawan accused the three ex-ministers and caretaker prime minister of negligence. The court of cassation cited "legitimate suspicion" over Sawan's neutrality, partly because his house was damaged in the blast.



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Lebanon request satellite images for site of Beirut blast