

[Five rockets target Iraq base housing US contractors: security source](#)

Wed, 2021-06-09 22:14

SAMARRA, Iraq: Five rockets Wednesday evening targeted Iraq's Balad air base, with two of the projectiles falling near an area used by US contractors without causing casualties, a security official told AFP.

"There were no victims or damage," the official said. Balad air base, north of Baghdad, is used by US company Sallyport to service F-16 fighter jets and has previously been targeted by rocket fire.



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Iraq releases militia commander as Iranian general arrives in Baghdad
Two drones shot down above Iraq base housing US troops: army

Sudan, Egypt renew calls for international role in Ethiopia dispute

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Wed, 2021-06-09 18:47

CAIRO: Sudan and Egypt renewed calls Wednesday for the international community to help in resolving their decade-long dispute with Ethiopia over a giant dam that Addis Ababa is building on the Blue Nile, the main tributary of the Nile River.

Egyptian foreign and irrigation ministers flew to Sudan's capital, Khartoum, for talks with Sudanese counterparts focusing on Ethiopia's dam project.

Tensions have mounted since the African Union-mediated talks between the three nations stalled in April.

In a joint statement after the meetings Wednesday, Egypt and Sudan warned of "serious risks and grave consequences of the unilateral filling" of the dam's massive reservoir. They fear Ethiopia will reduce their share of the Nile River water.

Cairo and Khartoum want an international agreement to govern how much water Ethiopia releases downstream, especially in a multi-year drought. Sudan and Egypt argue that Ethiopia's plan to add 13.5 billion cubic meters of water in 2021 to the dam's reservoir is a threat to them.

They have repeatedly called for the US, UN, and the European Union to help reach a legally binding deal.

There was no immediate comment from Ethiopia. Addis Ababa says the \$5 billion dam is essential, arguing the vast majority of its population lacks electricity.

The Blue Nile meets with the White Nile in the Sudanese capital. From Khartoum, it winds northward through Egypt and flows into the Mediterranean Sea.



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Egypt leader gives green light to Mideast's largest park project
Sudan ends subsidies for gasoline and diesel, raises prices

[US asks Israel, Palestinians to avoid 'provocations' after Jerusalem march approved](#)

Wed, 2021-06-09 21:34

WASHINGTON: The United States on Wednesday urged Israelis and Palestinians to avoid "provocations" and preserve a ceasefire after Israel approved a controversial nationalist march in Jerusalem.

"We believe it's essential to refrain from steps that exacerbate tensions," State Department spokesman Ned Price said when asked about the march. He said the United States was engaged in diplomacy and wanted to do "everything we can to try to prevent escalations or provocations that might provide a spark to renew violence."

Asked if the United States was opposed to the march, Price declined to respond directly but said: "We all saw what precipitated the last flare-up of violence and we know just how delicate the situation is."

The office of outgoing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave the green light to a march through Jerusalem next week, amid threats by Hamas to resume fighting if it goes ahead.

Earlier rallies by far-right Jewish groups raised tensions in Jerusalem, prompting a police intervention in the holy Al-Aqsa mosque compound that was cited by Hamas as it fired rockets into Israel.

The unrest triggered rocket attacks by Hamas, which prompted a military conflict that killed 260 Palestinians and at least 13 people in Israel last month.



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Israeli govt authorizes controversial Jerusalem march: PM's office
Palestinian teen bears scar of eviction battle in East Jerusalem

[Yemen condemns Houthi attacks on Marib in letter to UN Security Council](#)

Wed, 2021-06-09 20:27

LONDON: Yemen on Wednesday condemned the Houthi attacks on Marib in a letter to the UN Security Council, saying the Iran-backed militia's targeting of civilians in Marib is causing a humanitarian catastrophe.

The Houthi militia launched a brutal offensive to take control of oil and gas-rich Marib from the internationally-backed government.

The offensive sparked international condemnation as it has served as a safe haven for tens of thousands of internally displaced persons who have been fleeing the fighting since the conflict began almost 7 years ago.

During the session, Yemen also called on the UN Security Council to push for an end to Houthi attacks on civilians in Marib and Hodeidah.

Meanwhile, the Iranian opposition leader said during the session that Iran's human rights violations cases should be referred to the Security Council.

"The leaders of the regime must be brought to justice for their crimes against humanity over the past four decades," she added.



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Senior Houthi leader killed in clashes in Yemen's Al-Jawf province
Houthi-run court starts trial of abducted Yemeni model

Iran expert: Election candidates offer no roadmap to solve country's crises

Wed, 2021-06-09 19:35

LONDON: An Iran expert on Wednesday warned that none of the candidates in the country's presidential election on June 18 offer a route out of its many crises.

Nazila Fathi, an independent journalist and non-resident scholar at the Middle East Institute, was speaking at an event hosted by Chatham House titled "Iran's presidential election: Domestic and international implications" and attended by Arab News.

"Coronavirus has really wreaked havoc in Iran. The death tolls are huge. While it's true that the country started vaccines before the elections, no one knows what shots they'll get, what the plan is, and how the majority of people under 50 are going to get vaccinated," she said. "People are traveling out of the country for huge prices to get vaccinated."

Opinion

This section contains relevant reference points, placed in (Opinion field)

Iranians have also faced intense political pressure with "the suppressions of 2018 and 2019," and the regime "has used extreme force and violence to crack down on any kind of dissent," said the former New York Times Iran correspondent.

"People are just fed up. They don't feel like there's a reason for them to take part in the election or any other political event that would show support for the regime," she added.

"Long before the candidates were decided, people were calling for boycotting the election because they don't want their vote to be counted as support for the regime," Fathi said.

"Unfortunately none of the candidates, including Ebrahim Raisi – who seems to be the frontrunner – have been able to offer a policy, a roadmap or any kind of agenda that describes how they'd address the serious concerns that people have.

"Economic problems are deep and serious. They've impacted people in very profound ways. But none of the candidates have offered any policy on how they'll address the problem, including the head of the central bank, who has

been in charge of monetary policy.”

Fathi added: “People don’t know what’s going to happen to them on basic questions that every presidential candidate should answer.”

She said the regime is increasingly disinterested in the views of the people, and the outcome of the election has been manufactured with the disqualification of candidates.

“The regime is on a trend where it cares less and less about how people are going to vote. It’s showing less and less accountability,” she added.

“The regime doesn’t care about turnout, and they want to move with this election so there would be no risk to Raisi winning.”



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Ebrahim Raisi: hard-line challenger in Iran
Close ally of supreme leader is favorite to win Iran election