

Egypt and Turkey conclude talks on regional issues

Thu, 2021-05-06 18:18

LONDON: Egypt and Turkey concluded consultations on Thursday in the Egyptian capital Cairo to discuss ties and regional conflicts.

A joint statement described the talks as “frank and in-depth” and dealt with bilateral relations and a number of regional issues, particularly the situations in Libya, Syria, Iraq, and “the need to achieve peace and security in the Eastern Mediterranean region.”

The two day consultations were headed by Egyptian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Hamdi Sanad Loza, and his Turkish counterpart Sedat Onal.

“The two sides will evaluate the outcome of this round of consultations and agree on the next steps,” the joint statement added.

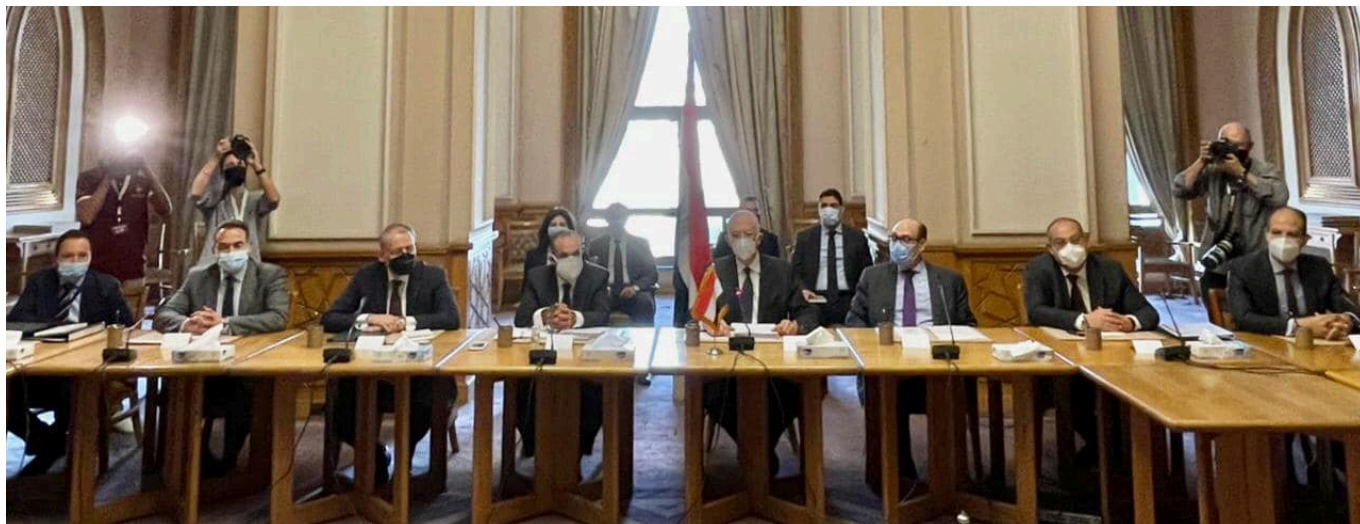
The discussions were the first high-level public talks for years between the two powers.

Turkey has been striving to mend fences with several US-allied Arab states but Egypt has so far responded cautiously to Turkish overtures.

(With Reuters)







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[Hamdi Sanad Loza](#)

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Egypt, Turkey hold 'exploratory talks' to mend ties
Egypt and Turkey to discuss steps needed to restore relations

[Qatar's attorney general orders arrest of finance minister](#)

Author:

Thu, 2021-05-06 17:41

LONDON: Qatar's Public Prosecutor ordered the arrest of Minister of Finance Ali Sharif Al-Emadi over reports of crime related to holding public office, Qatar News Agency reported on Thursday.

"After reviewing documents, and their attached reports, the Attorney General ordered the arrest of the Minister of Finance Ali Sharif Al-Emadi to investigate what was mentioned in the reports of crimes related to practicing public office," the statement said.

The reports consisted of damage to public funds, abuse of public office, and abuse of power.

The Public Prosecutor ordered wide investigations into the crimes raised in the submitted reports.



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Qatar moves from football to farming in post-pandemic food security push
Qatar's emir hold talks with Saudi foreign minister

[UN urges Israel to stop demolitions and evacuations in Sheikh Jarrah in West Bank](#)

Thu, 2021-05-06 17:12

LONDON: The UN special coordinator for the Middle East peace process urged Israel to cease demolitions and evictions, in line with its obligations under international humanitarian law.

"The latest developments related to the eviction of Palestine refugee families in Sheikh Jarrah and other neighborhoods in occupied East Jerusalem are also very worrying," Tor Wennesland said in a statement on Thursday.

Twenty-two Palestinians were wounded in overnight clashes with Israeli police in annexed east Jerusalem, the Red Crescent said Thursday, as tensions flared over a controversial land rights case.

The legal case centers on the homes of four Palestinian families in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood near Jerusalem's walled Old City on land claimed by Jews.

He also said he was "deeply concerned" by the surge in tensions and violence in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, since the start of the Muslim month of Ramadan.

"In the past few days alone, two Palestinians, including a woman and a child, were killed in separate incidents, by Israeli security forces (ISF) in the context of clashes or attacks," said Wennesland.

He also said an Israeli was killed by a Palestinian in a drive-by shooting, and several others were injured.

"I reiterate that ISF must exercise maximum restraint and use lethal force only when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life," he added.

Last month, anti-Arab Israeli extremists, emboldened by the election of their allies to parliament, began a march calling for violence against Arabs.

The move raised tensions, prompting cross-border attacks from Gaza and clashes between Palestinians and Israeli police.

Wennesland said perpetrators of violence on all sides must be held accountable and swiftly brought to justice.

"I call on political, religious and community leaders on all sides to stand firmly against violence, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric," he said, adding "if unaddressed, the situation could spiral out of control."

Meanwhile, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Britain urged Israel on Thursday to halt its decision to further building of new settlements in the West Bank.

"We urge the government of Israel to reverse its decision to advance the construction of 540 settlement units in the Har Homa E area of the occupied West Bank, and to cease its policy of settlement expansion across the Occupied Palestinian Territories," the European nations said in a joint statement.

"If implemented, the decision to advance settlements in Har Homa, between East Jerusalem and Bethlehem, will cause further damage to the prospects for a viable Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as the capital of both Israel and a Palestinian State," they said.



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UK urged to intervene to stop illegal Israeli evictions
Family heartbroken after Palestinian teen killed by Israeli army

[Nile dam 'existential issue' for Egyptians, envoy says](#)

Author:

Wed, 2021-05-05 21:59

CAIRO: Motaz Zahran, Egypt's ambassador to the US, has sought Washington's support for the mediation process under the leadership of the African Union president, in order to reach a binding agreement on the rules for filling and operating the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) as soon as possible.

He said it will protect security and stability in the region and safeguard the US strategic interests with the three countries involved: Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia.

Ethiopia started building the dam, which is 1.8 kilometers in length, in 2011. However, Egypt fears the GERD will threaten its supplies of water from the River Nile. Sudan, meanwhile, is concerned about the dam's safety and water flows through its own dams and water stations.

During a seminar at the American National War College, Zahran said Egypt will not be complacent about its water security, warning that unilateral management of the process of filling and operating the dam could result in the exacerbation of water poverty in Egypt.

He said it could magnify the negative effects of climate change in a manner that cannot be contained, causing massive environmental, social and economic damage.

Zahran also said the issue of Nile water in both Egypt and Sudan is too dangerous to be left to Ethiopia, due to its significant consequences for the people of the region.

Both Cairo and Khartoum stress the need to reach a binding and comprehensive deal that guarantees the rights and interests of the three countries.

Zahran said it was the successive Ethiopian administrations that deliberately pursued policies based on fueling Ethiopian public opinion regarding issues of Nile water and its internal trade. This came in an attempt to contain the internal tensions in Ethiopia, instead of seeking to reach a compromise that secures the common interest of the people of the region.

The ambassador said there was a solution on the negotiating table in Washington last year that would allow generating electricity as efficiently as possible from the dam, as well as guaranteeing Ethiopia's right to establish future projects under the umbrella of international law. But the Ethiopian side was absent from the meeting to sign the agreement, given its preference for unilateral action without being bound by international law, and without any prior coordination or consultation regarding dam projects.

"This is the systematic policy pursued by Ethiopia with its various neighbors, which has caused Lake Turkana in Kenya to be on the verge of extinction, as declared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization," he said. "It also inflicts severe damage on the inhabitants of the Juba and Shabelle rivers in Somalia."

Zahran stressed that Egypt cannot allow the repetition of such unilateral Ethiopian practices in the Nile Basin as well, and that this is an existential and fateful issue for the Egyptian people.

Negotiations between Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia over the GERD have so far failed to reach a binding agreement.

Talks were held in early April in the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kinshasa, with representatives from Cairo and Khartoum voicing their fears over the potential negative effects of the dam on the Nile and its dependents downstream.



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Egypt 'will not give up a single drop of Nile water,' vows PM
Ethiopia rejected 15 Egyptian ideas to resolve Nile dam dispute: Water minister

[Egypt in 3rd COVID wave calls off end-of-Ramadan, Eid festivities](#)

Author:

Wed, 2021-05-05 21:27

CAIRO: The closing hours of Egyptian stores, malls and restaurants will be brought forward to 9 p.m. (1900 GMT) to help contain the coronavirus for two weeks from Thursday, straddling the last days of the Muslim holy month of

Ramadan and Eid celebrations, the prime minister said on Wednesday. Large gatherings, such as weddings, and concerts will be banned over the same period and beaches and parks will be shut between May 12-16, Mostafa Madbouly said in a televised address.

The number of new coronavirus cases has been steadily rising in Egypt in recent weeks and officials have warned of infections spreading further as families meet during Ramadan, which ends next week, with Eid festivities to follow.

"As a government and as officials, we are deeply worried that citizens are not fully complying with health precautions... we are beginning to see that infections are happening on a familial scale, when one person gets sick (they infect) the whole family," Madbouly said.

While Egypt imposed stricter measures at the start of the pandemic, closing its airspace and setting nightly curfews to curb the spread of the virus, it has remained largely open since June 2020.

"You have a responsibility not just for yourself but also your family," he said, flanked by Health Minister Hala Zayed and other senior officials.

"We are at a critical stage," he said.

Some venues including hotels have been required to operate at limited capacity, and Madbouly said authorities had fined 1.7 million people 50 Egyptian pounds (\$3.20) each for not wearing masks in public.

The government said Eid Al-Fitr holidays, marking the end of the Muslim dawn-to-dusk fasting month of Ramadan, will run from May 12-16.

Worshippers will be allowed to perform Eid prayers at designated mosques where regular weekly Friday prayers are held.

The government has been rolling out a nationwide vaccination program since January, and Madbouly said approximately 1 million people had been vaccinated so far.

Egypt expects to receive 4.9 million doses of different types of coronavirus vaccines in May, the earliest of which will be a shipment of 1.7 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine due to arrive next week.

The health ministry reported 1,090 new cases and 60 more deaths as of Tuesday. Experts say official numbers likely only reflect a small fraction of COVID-19 cases in the country due to relatively limited testing and the non-inclusion of private test results.

(\$1 = 15.6200 Egyptian pounds)

(With Reuters and AFP)



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[Mostafa Madbouly](#)

COVID-19: Egypt identifies next 10 days as dangerous for spread, urges caution Egypt expects \$6bn income from tourism during 2021/22