

Palestinian lawyer confident of stopping Jerusalem evictions

Tue, 2021-05-04 19:49

AMMAN: Lawyers and activists trying to prevent the eviction of some 87 Palestinian residents from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah district of Jerusalem appeared to be upbeat this week.

Palestinian lawyer Hosni Abu Hussein told Arab News that Israeli courts have given the residents living in 12 housing units in the East Jerusalem neighborhood until Thursday to come up with an agreement with Nahlat Shamon, a US-registered settler organization.

"We sat for hours with the judge and each of us gave suggestions to settle the case," Hussein said.

"Our suggestion is that we deposit the rental money for the units to a secure fund at the court until the real owner of the land – the housing units were built in the 1950s – is determined."

□Hussein said this suggestion was made because non-payment of rent is the fastest way to evict residents, according to rental laws.

□Jordan was in control of Jerusalem when the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) built the housing units on the vacant land and started to charge Palestinians rent. Settler organizations, which also claim to be the owners of the land, are now demanding rent payment.

According to the rent protection law in Jerusalem, the offer by the settler organization allows for Palestinian families to stay as long as a designated member of the family is alive. Thereafter, the settler organization would take over the homes.

Palestinian residents have rejected this offer.

"We have been fighting for years, stressing that the settler organization has no right to the land," said Abu Hussein, a Palestinian resident. "Why would we agree to this offer now?"

□If no agreement is reached by Thursday, an Israeli high court judge will decide how to proceed in determining the real owners of the disputed land.

New evidence, which has emerged from the Ottoman records in Turkey and the Jordanian government, proves Jordan and UNRWA agreed to build housing units on the land for Palestinians, Abu Hussein said. This agreement came after the Palestinians became refugees in the city following World War II as the land actually belonged to the Hijazi Saadi family, dated 1149 Hijri (1736 AD).

□Using old Ottoman documents, Nahlat Shamon said the land belonged to an Oriental Jewish group that registered itself in 1972.

Palestinian lawyers dispute this claim and say the documents in the Ottoman archives in Istanbul that Nahlat Shamon is referring to have no existence and are forged.

□Jawdat Manna, head of the Jerusalem campaign organizing regional and international advocacy, told Arab News that he is excited about the positive feedback the campaign has had.

“We now have strong legal support from lawyers in Kuwait, Bahrain, Jordan, the UK, and the US as well as strong public advocacy support on behalf of the threatened Palestinian families,” Manna said.

□Ahmad Deek, a top official at the Palestinian Foreign Ministry, told Arab News that the ministry has filed a complaint with the International Criminal Court.

“Our complaint provides a comprehensive summary of the case and a call for an investigation of the injustice that the Palestinian families are suffering from,” Deek said.

□Palestinians also complain that homes belonging to Arab families in west Jerusalem and other parts of Israel are not being allowed to return to their original documented and undisputed owners.

Aref Hammad, a spokesperson for the Sheikh Jarrah families, explained that the families are facing a lot of pressure. Israeli police were filmed on Monday violently breaking into one of the houses to arrest a Palestinian man.

An Israel police spokesman said they arrested those who participated in a demonstration, which resulted in closed roads and the police being attacked.

“After the demonstration was termed illegal and demonstrators were given time to disperse, the police broke up the protests using regular crowd control means,” the spokesman said. “Several suspects were arrested and are being charged with attacks on the police by throwing stones at them.”



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Anger in East Jerusalem as settlers occupy homesIsrael resumes plans of east Jerusalem settlement, cuts access for Palestinians

[Egypt court upholds seizure of ship that blocked Suez Canal](#)

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1620144383777958100

Tue, 2021-05-04 19:10

CAIRO: An Egyptian court Tuesday rejected an appeal by the owner of a massive container ship of the court-ordered seizure of the vessel over a financial dispute.

Egyptian authorities have impounded the hulking Ever Given, which blocked the

Suez Canal for nearly a week in March, halting billions of dollars in maritime commerce.

The Suez Canal Authority said the vessel would not be allowed to leave the country until a compensation amount is settled on with the vessel's Japanese owner, Shoei Kisen Kaisha Ltd.

A court in the Suez Canal city of Ismailia ordered the seizure of the vessel earlier this month. The Ever Given's owner filed an appeal on April 22 in hopes of overturning the decision.

The Economic Court of Ismailia on Tuesday upheld the seizure decision. There was no immediate comment from the vessel's owner.

The Suez Canal Authority has demanded \$916 million in compensation, according to the UK Club, an insurer of the Ever Given. That amount takes into account the salvage operation, costs of stalled canal traffic and lost transit fees for the week the Ever Given blocked the canal.

Negotiations between the Suez Canal Authority and the ship owner were still ongoing to settle the compensation claim, Shoei Kisen Kaisha Ltd. said last week. The company said it has notified a number of the owners of the approximately 18,000 containers on the ship to assume part of the damages demand. It refused to disclose further details of the negotiations, including the amount covered by insurance and how much it is asking freight owners to share.

The Ever Given was on its way to the Dutch port of Rotterdam on March 23 when it slammed into the bank of a single-lane stretch of the canal about 6 kilometers (3.7 miles) north of the southern entrance, near the city of Suez. A massive salvage effort by a flotilla of tugboats helped by the tides freed the skyscraper-sized, Panama-flagged Ever Given six days later, ending the crisis, and allowing hundreds of waiting ships to pass through the canal. The blockage of the canal forced some ships to take the long alternate route around the Cape of Good Hope at Africa's southern tip, requiring additional fuel and other costs. Hundreds of other ships waited in place for the blockage to end.

The shutdown, which raised worries of supply shortages and rising costs for consumers, added strain on the shipping industry, already under pressure from the coronavirus pandemic.



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Japanese shipowner asks cargo owners to share Suez damage cost
Suez Canal seeks deal with Ever Given owners

[Iraq health minister resigns over hospital fire](#)

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1620140983827743500

Tue, 2021-05-04 18:20

BAGHDAD: Iraq's Health Minister Hassan Al-Tamimi resigned on Tuesday over a fire from an exploding oxygen tank at a Baghdad COVID-19 hospital last month that killed over 80 people, the government said in a statement.

Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi's cabinet also ordered the dismissal of the director of the Ibn Khatib hospital and other senior hospital officials. The entire hospital had been converted to treat COVID-19 patients.

The April 24 blaze highlighted the neglect of a health care system that was once one of the best in the Middle East, but has been wrecked by conflict, international sanctions, the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 and rampant state-wide corruption since then.

Tamimi had been suspended immediately after the fire. The government lifted his suspension on Tuesday but he immediately resigned.

The government has ordered hospitals across the country to review and implement better health and safety procedures.

The incident further eroded Iraqis' trust in their health care system. During the coronavirus pandemic, that lack of trust has meant many do not seek medical help when infected with COVID-19, and have decided not to be vaccinated at state-run medical centers.



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Anger in Iraq as 82 die in blast and fire at COVID-19 hospital
Iraqi medics recount horrors from inferno

Egypt steps up response to second filling of GERD

Author:

Mon, 2021-05-03 21:42

CAIRO: Egypt has outlined four plans to mitigate the effects of the second filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on the country's irrigation system.

Mohammed Ghanem, spokesperson for the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, said that the ministry wants to ensure a strong water system under all possible scenarios.

"We have four major plans to mitigate the effects of any potential crisis," he said in a statement.

Ghanem said that the ministry has begun upgrading and lining over 8,200 km of irrigation canals at an overall cost of EGP18 billion (\$1.1 billion) to reduce water waste.

The second plan is the maintenance and construction of 92 water pumping and lifting stations, which operate with high efficiency, especially during peak demand.

The spokesperson said that the third plan is to inaugurate the Al-Mahsama wastewater treatment plant in Ismailia to drain 1 million cubic meters daily, and the Bahr Al-Baqar wastewater treatment plant, which treats 5 million cubic meters daily.

Bahr Al-Baqar is the largest treatment plant in the world. The inauguration of a Hammam wastewater treatment plant to serve new delta projects is also part of the third plan.

Ghanem said that the fourth plan is to encourage farmers to use modern irrigation methods in desert areas.

Agriculture consumes the largest proportion of the Nile water, he said.

The spokesman said that Cairo opposes the second filling of the dam, which will negatively affect both Egypt and Sudan.

Ghanem said Ethiopia did not generate energy last year, and will probably not generate energy this year, but seeks to impose a "fait accompli policy," which is rejected by Cairo.



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[Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam \(GERD\)](#)

Egypt applies stricter COVID-19 precautionary measures UAE entrepreneur
Mohamed Alabbar covers Egypt's Enigma magazine

[Rockets land in Iraqi base hosting US contractors](#)

Mon, 2021-05-03 20:05

BAGHDAD: Three rockets were fired Monday evening toward Iraq's Balad air base north of Baghdad, a security source told AFP, but without causing US casualties or damage, the Pentagon said, citing initial reports.

The rockets fell in an area where US company Sallyport – the contractor that maintains F-16 aircraft Iraq has purchased from the US in recent years – is located, the security source said.

"Initial reports are that there are no US casualties or damages," said Commander Jessica McNulty, Pentagon spokesperson.

No US or coalition troops are assigned at Balad, although US citizen contractors work there, the Pentagon said.

It is the second attack targeting US interests in under 24 hours, after two rockets Sunday targeted an air base at Baghdad airport housing US-led coalition troops. Sunday's attack did not cause casualties.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for either attack. Around 30 rocket or bomb attacks have targeted American interests in Iraq – including troops, the embassy or Iraqi supply convoys to foreign forces – since President Joe Biden took office in January. Two foreign contractors, one Iraqi contractor and eight Iraqi civilians have been killed in the strikes. Washington routinely blames Iran-linked Iraqi factions for such attacks on its troops and diplomats. In early April, two rockets hit near Balad, without causing casualties or property damage.



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Iraq to invest \$3bn in Basra Gas Co. over five years18 Iraqis killed in multiple night-time extremist raids