

# Sultan's eldest son will become Oman's crown prince, new decree says

Wed, 2021-01-13 00:56

DUBAI: Oman's crown prince will be the eldest son of the serving sultan, according to details of a new decree to establish a mechanism for the transfer of power.

Sultan Haitham bin Tariq announced on Monday that Oman would appoint a crown prince for the first time.

The details announced on Tuesday mean his eldest son, Dhi Yazan bin Haitham, is set to become the sultanate's first crown prince.

The decree establishes a basic law defining a "specific and stable mechanism" for selecting a crown prince.

The basic law stipulated that "the mandate of power would be transferred from the sultan to his eldest son, then the eldest son of the latter's son, and so on," said the decree that was published in the official gazette.

The announcement came on the first anniversary of Sultan Haitham's assumption of power, following the death of Sultan Qaboos.

Sultan Qaboos was the founding father of modern Oman and named his successor in a sealed envelope that was opened after his death.

The new decree stipulated that if the mandate of power is transferred to someone under the age of 21, then the powers of the sultan shall be exercised by a guardianship council appointed by the sultan, or by the royal family council.

It also said that if the crown prince dies before the powers are passed on to him, the title goes to his eldest son, even if he has siblings.

The decree is one of two issued by the sultan. The second established a new law for the parliament – the Council of Oman. It defines the council's capabilities, membership conditions and their rights and duties, as well as regulating everything related to the council's affairs.

These decrees have been issued "to meet the requirements of the sultanate during the next stage, and in line with Oman's Vision 2040," state news agency ONA said.

The same decree also emphasizes the role of the state in guaranteeing more rights and freedoms for citizens, the most important of which are equality between women and men, caring for children, the handicapped and youth, and compulsory education, ONA said.



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## [Jordan, Egypt could join Quartet's Mideast peace drive](#)

Author:

Tue, 2021-01-12 23:44

AMMAN: Jordan and Egypt are emerging as potential new members of the international Quartet for Mideast peace after the foreign ministers of both countries joined a meeting of the multilateral forum in Cairo on Monday.

The Quartet consisting of the UN, the EU, the US and Russia was set up in 2002 to help mediate Middle East peace negotiations.

Jordan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi and

Palestinian Foreign Minister Riad Malki were invited by Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry to attend the meeting, which included French Foreign Affairs Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian and German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas, according to a statement by Jordan's Foreign Ministry.

Oraib Rantawi, director of the Al-Quds Center for Political Studies, told Arab News that the idea of adding Jordan and Egypt to the Quartet had been discussed by the Obama-Biden administration.

"Although the issue was discussed in the last days of the Obama administration, I don't think that it will be decided until the Biden administration takes over and begins to make its position public," he said.

Rantawi said that Morocco, Saudi Arabia and the UAE also may be invited to participate.

Riyad Mansour, Palestinian ambassador to the UN, welcomed the potential expansion of the Quartet.

"If the nucleus of the international community's approach to resolving the Middle East conflict is the Quartet, we would like to talk about its enlargement," he said.

Mansour said that Egypt and Jordan could be the first additions, with other countries to follow later.

He told the Al-Monitor news website that when the 2007 Middle East peace talks were planned for Annapolis in the US, few countries signed up. "But within a short period of time, everyone wanted to attend. Fifty countries ended up joining the talks."

Ahmad Deek, director-general at the office of the Palestinian foreign minister, told Arab News that Palestinians are hoping for the return of a "sane international order" following the Trump era.

"We are looking forward to a period in which international law and the concept of collective multilateral efforts become the norm again in foreign policy conflict resolution," he said.

Najeeb Qadoumi, a member of the Palestinian National Council, said there is optimism that current efforts will yield positive results.

"There is no doubt that the Palestinian cause will return to the center of attention when Trump is no longer around," Qadoumi said.

"Jordan, which has suffered from the absence of a resolution of the Palestinian conflict and especially the status of refugees, will contribute to any efforts."





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## [GCC welcomes US designation of Houthis as terrorist organization](#)

Author:

Tue, 2021-01-12 23:09

RIYADH: The GCC on Tuesday welcomed US moves to designate the Houthi militia in Yemen as a terrorist organization.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Sunday that the US planned to blacklist the Iran-backed group this month and place a number of its leaders on terror lists.

The Secretary General of the GCC Nayef Falah Al-Hajraf described the move as "a necessary step that is consistent with the demands of the Yemeni government [which wants] to put an end to violations that these militias carry out against the brotherly people of Yemen."

He said the Houthi's threat to the region was part of the Iranian regime's

agenda.

Al-Hajraf said he hopes the designation puts an end to the “terror acts” of the Houthis and its supporters.

He said it would also help block the supply of ballistic missiles, drones and other weapons that the militia uses to target the Yemeni people, threaten international shipping and neighboring countries.

Saudi Arabia has also welcomed the decision by the US administration.

Gulf countries back Yemen’s internationally recognized government, which was driven from the capital Sanaa in 2014 by Houthi forces. The takeover sparked the conflict which continues today and has devastated the country.



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Yemeni govt welcomes US decision to designate Houthis as terrorist organization

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[\*\*Erdogan-Hariri surprise meeting angers\*\*](#)

# Turkish opposition

Tue, 2021-01-12 22:55

JEDDAH: In a surprise visit, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met one-on-one with Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri on Jan. 8 in Istanbul.

The cooperation avenues between the two countries, including boosting economic and business ties, were discussed during the friendly meeting, in which Hariri thanked Erdogan for his support to Turkish investments made in Lebanon.

Not everyone, however, was satisfied with this visit by the Lebanese prime minister, whose name has been often associated with corruption cases in Turkey, especially regarding the alleged involvement of the Hariri family in Turk Telekom, the country's leading company in the field of information and communication technologies and once its most lucrative.

In his parliamentary speech on Monday, Faik Oztrak, spokesman of the main opposition party (CHP), reacted to the warm welcome of Hariri by Erdogan, saying, "How can you sit at the same table with this man who made billions of dollars without paying a penny on Telekom?"

The Turkish president's Senior Adviser Yigit Bulut and Turkey's Vice President Fuat Oktay were also members of the board of directors of Turk Telekom, who benefitted from high salaries during the privatization process. Oktay worked as the deputy chairman of the company for a long time.

"This family borrowed money from Turkish banks and paid the treasury's privatization price for Telekom. Then, they plundered millions of dollars in dividend income from Turkey to Lebanon. He placed \$3.5 billion in loan debt on our banks," Oztrak said.

The criticisms of the opposition lawmaker served as a reminder of the long-hidden scandal involving the telecommunications company, which came under the spotlight in March 2013, when the pro-government daily Sabah revealed that Turk Telekom had secretly and illegally put its copper cables up for sale to transform them into cheaper fiber optic cables.

But this sale, which involved thousands of tons of scraped cables – worth up to \$10 million dollars – was not officially made known to the stock market, despite the existence of two court rulings that prevented the Lebanese Hariri Group, owning 55 percent of the stakes in the company, from performing this sale, as it did not have any official approval from the Turkish Treasury.

This corruption went unnoticed for years, and no in-depth investigation was carried out, neither about the amount of copper sold nor about the buyers.

Turk Telekom was privatized in 2005, just three years after the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) came into power. Ojer Telecommunications, owned by the Hariri family, acquired its stakes for \$6.5 billion by receiving loans from dozens of Turkish and international lenders.

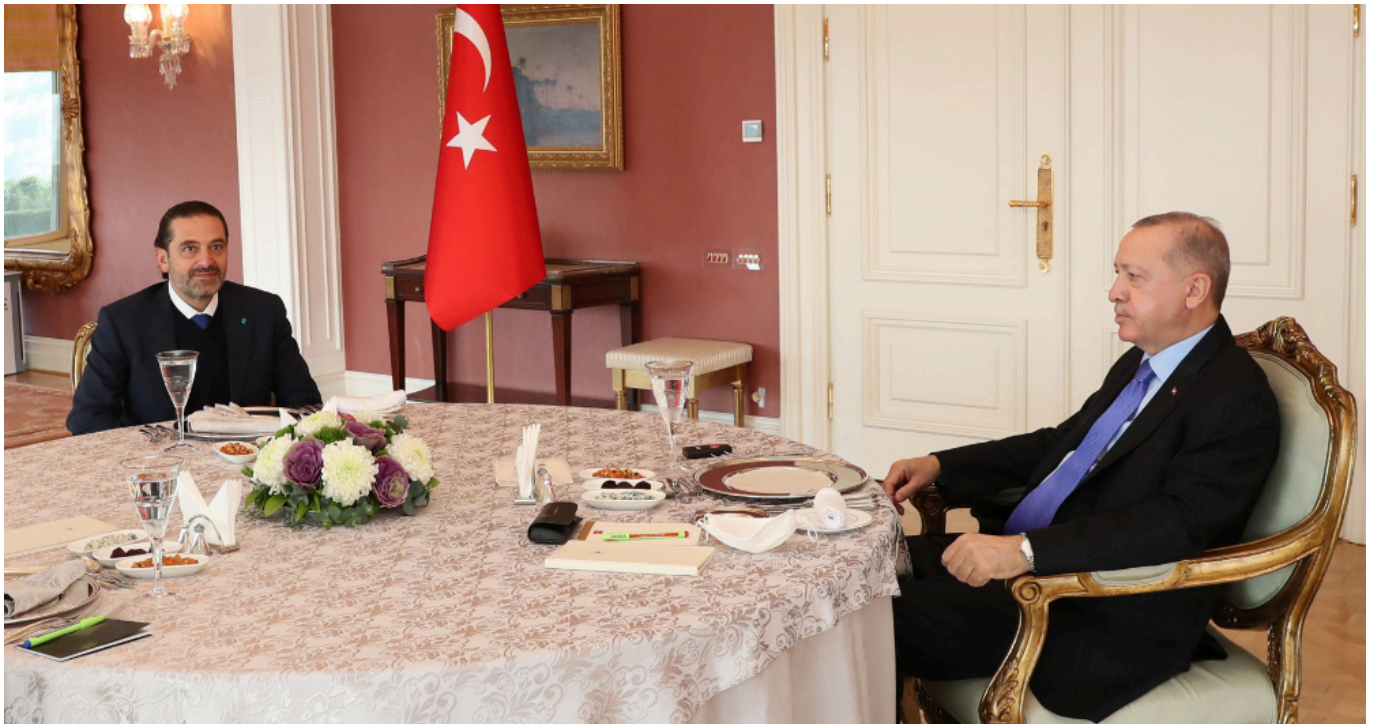


In 2018, the Hariri family failed to pay an installment on Turkey's once largest corporate loan of \$4.75 billion, and its holdings were taken over by some 20 lenders, including several Turkish banks.

The main opposition party is calling on the Turkish government to be held accountable for the corruption allegations and has blamed the AKP for the slowest Internet bandwidth in the country due to the inefficient allocation of state resources.

Oztrak has been criticizing the government's handling of the Turk Telekom issue since 2017. In another parliamentary question that he put forward in July 2017, Oztrak said that public resources were being used to compensate for the failed payment of the Hariri family in Turk Telekom, with public authorities closing their eyes to the ongoing corruption.

In answer to Oztrak's parliamentary inquiry, then Vice Prime Minister Nurettin Canikli said that Turk Telekom transferred about \$3.1 billion abroad as a profit share.



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# US move to designate Houthis terrorist organization will help Yemen peace efforts: Officials, analysts

Author:

Tue, 2021-01-12 22:17

AL-MUKALLA: America's decision to designate the Iran-backed Houthis as a foreign terrorist organization will help pave the way for peace in Yemen, government officials and analysts claim.

The designation, due to come into effect the day before US President Donald Trump's administration leaves office, would curb Houthi human rights abuses and the group's resistance to peace efforts, while weakening financial sources that fuel the war in the country, they said.

But critics have argued that the move might exacerbate the humanitarian crisis, escalate violence, and encourage the Houthis to strengthen ties with Iran.

Yemen's parliament has urged American legislators to approve the designation to punish the Houthis for crimes carried out against Yemenis. It believes the move would force the Houthis into accepting unfulfilled peace agreements and current peace efforts, the official news agency SABA said.

"The Houthi militia has destroyed the land and people of Yemen and posed a threat to international peace and security," the parliament said in a statement.

Ahmed Obeid bin Daghr, former prime minister of Yemen and a senior adviser to the Yemeni president, described the US move as an "accurate and realistic description" of the Houthi movement, adding that the step would boost the Yemeni government and Arab coalition efforts to recapture state bodies from the Houthis.

In a tweet, Daghr said: "With this historic decision, the Americans have expressed their desire to achieve peace, sovereignty, and unity in Yemen and to save Yemen from Iranian interference."

Despite strong opposition from aid workers and many Yemen experts, the internationally recognized government of Yemen has stepped up diplomatic efforts to get the Houthi movement declared a terrorist organization following last month's missile attack on Aden airport that killed and wounded more than 130 people.

The Yemeni government has said that Houthi crimes and human rights abuses are on a par with those committed by other terrorist organizations such as Daesh and Al-Qaeda.

However, critics have pointed out that the US move may aggravate the world's



worst humanitarian crisis in Yemen by restricting movements of international aid organizations that distribute vital humanitarian assistance to millions of hungry Yemenis and could also provoke the Houthis into escalating their military operations throughout Yemen.

Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak, Yemen's foreign minister, told Arab News that the decision would not have any impact on humanitarian deliveries inside Houthi-controlled areas, as it excluded humanitarian workers who deal with the rebels from sanctions.

"We will not allow the punishment of our people in areas under the control of the militias. The decision includes exceptions that will enable humanitarian organizations to operate," the minister said.

At the same time, Yemeni government officials who handle humanitarian activities inside Yemen backed the US move, blaming the Houthis for fueling the humanitarian crisis by blocking the distribution of life-saving aid in areas under their control.

Based on his previous experience with the Houthis, former Yemeni minister of local administration and chairman of the higher committee for relief in Yemen, Abdul Raqeeb Fateh, said the designation would have positive impacts on the delivery of humanitarian assistance since it would put an end to the plundering of aid by the Houthis.

"Since 2014, the Houthis have looted relief aid and used it to support their war efforts and refused to apply humanitarian standards. The decision will force them to back down and reduce plundering," he added in a tweet.

Abdu Abdullah Majili, a Yemeni army spokesman, told Arab News that troops were ready to confront any military action by the Houthis in response to the US announcement. "The national army is prepared to inflict defeat on the militia. The Houthis have committed heinous crimes against Yemenis since Sept. 21, 2014."

Yemeni military and political experts noted that aggressive actions by the Houthis would only consolidate grounds for the designation and would push more countries into backing the decision.

"The Houthis have no other option but to comply with peace efforts. They are responsible for ruining the biggest political process in Yemen brokered by the world," Najeeb Ghallab, undersecretary at Yemen's Information Ministry and a political analyst, told Arab News, referring to the Houthi coup.

Nadwa Dawsari, a Yemeni conflict analyst, claimed that only a military operation would put an end to the Houthi threat and push the group into accepting peace initiatives.

In a tweet, she said: "Neither political negotiations with Houthis nor their designation alone will contain their (and Iran's threat). Only a strong and well-planned ground military action that weakens them will neutralize their threat and bring Yemen closer to peace."

News of the US designation negatively impacted exchange markets in the country, causing the Yemeni currency to fall again. Local moneychangers told Arab News that the Yemeni riyal was traded at 780 against the dollar on Tuesday, falling from 715 on Sunday. The riyal regained 20 percent of its value last month when a new government was formed and returned to Aden under the Riyadh Agreement.



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