

Gunman fires at Israeli officers in Jerusalem's Old City, is shot dead

Author:

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Mon, 2020-12-21 18:53

JERUSALEM: A gunman opened fire on Israeli police in Jerusalem's Old City on Monday, before being chased down by officers who shot him dead, police said. "The suspect reached Huta gate (near the Al-Aqsa mosque compound) and shot at the police position with an (assault) rifle," a police statement said. "The officers went in pursuit after the terrorist while shooting at him," the statement added, with a spokesman confirming to AFP the suspect had been killed.

One police officer was lightly wounded when he fell during the chase, the statement said.

The police spokesman could not provide details on the assailant's identity. Similar past attacks have been carried out by Palestinians from Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank, as well as by Arab Israelis.

From October 2015, Israel and the West Bank saw a wave of "lone wolf" attacks on Israelis by predominantly young, knife-wielding Palestinians.

Car-ramming attacks were also used, and more rarely, firearms. The attacks have become less frequent but have not stopped altogether.

Israel annexed east Jerusalem, which includes the Old City, following the 1967 Six-Day War, in a move not recognized by most of the international community.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Palestinians](#)

[Israel](#)

[**UAE records 1,077 new COVID-19 cases, 2 deaths**](#)

Author:

Mon, 2020-12-21 22:37

DUBAI: The UAE on Monday recorded 1,077 new cases of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and two related deaths.

Officials from the country's Ministry of Health and Prevention said the total number of cases since the pandemic began had reached 194,652, with the death toll now running at 639.

It was also announced that over the previous 24-hour period, 845 people had recovered after contracting the virus, taking the total number of recoveries to 169,840.

During daily inspection tours, Dubai Economy issued a warning to one establishment for not adhering to anti-COVID-19 measures, but 421 other businesses inspected were found to be compliant.

Etihad Airways said that it would require all passengers arriving from the UK

to provide a negative polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test taken within 72 hours of their departure time, following an announcement from the UAE's National Emergency Crisis and Disasters Management Authority.

"Etihad is the only airline in the world requiring 100 percent of its passengers to show a negative PCR test before traveling and again on arrival into Abu Dhabi, ensuring peace of mind for all on board," Abu Dhabi's national carrier said in a statement on its website.

Meanwhile, the UAE was ranked among the top countries in world for its efficiency in dealing with the repercussions of the COVID-19 epidemic and the speed of its recovery phase.

According to a recent Global Soft Power Index questionnaire issued by UK-based Brand Finance, the Emirates ranked first in the Middle East and 14th globally in dealing with the virus outbreak.

Elsewhere, Kuwait recorded 230 new COVID-19 cases, upping the total for the country to 148,209, with the death toll reaching 922 after one new fatality was registered.

تعلن [#وزارة_الصحة](#) عن تأكيد إصابة 230 حالة، وتسجيل 216 حالة شفاء، و حالة وفاة واحدة جديدة بـ [#فيروس_كورونا_المستجد](#) COVID-19، ليصبح إجمالي عدد الحالات 148,209 حالة pic.twitter.com/4xKYmV9U1E

- (@KUWAIT_MOH) [December 21, 2020](#) وزارة الصحة - الكويت -

Oman's Health Ministry confirmed 264 new cases and one death, moving the totals to 127,931 and 1,489, respectively.

[#Statement](#) No. 249

December 21, 2020 pic.twitter.com/Tugn5eValo

- (@OmaniMOH) [December 21, 2020](#) وزارة الصحة - عُمان -



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[Global Soft Power Index](#)

[Brand Finance](#)

[dubai economy](#)

[Polymerase Chain Reaction \(PCR\)](#)

[National Crisis and Disaster Management Authority](#)

[Iraq's cabinet approves 2021 draft budget of \\$103 bln](#)

Mon, 2020-12-21 21:11

BAGHDAD: Iraq's cabinet on Monday approved a 2021 draft budget of 150 trillion Iraqi dinars (\$103 billion) as the country wrestles with a major economic and financial crisis due to low crude prices. The budget deficit would be estimated at 63 trillion dinars (\$43 billion), two government sources said.

Draft 2021 budget is based on a world oil price of \$42 a barrel, sources said.

(\$1 = 1.450 Iraqi dinars)



Main category:
[Middle-East](#)

[Morocco, Israel to seal normalization with first direct flight](#)

Author:

Mon, 2020-12-21 20:12

RABAT: Jared Kushner, US President Donald Trump's son-in-law and advisor, is due to arrive Tuesday in Morocco from Israel on the first direct commercial flight between the two countries since they normalised ties.

The flight from Tel Aviv to Rabat is seen as highly symbolic after Morocco announced on December 10 a "resumption of relations" with Israel.

It also aims to showcase the achievements of the Trump administration in Middle East diplomacy, weeks before Trump is replaced at the White House by President-elect Joe Biden.

Morocco became the third Arab state this year, after the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, to normalise ties with Israel under US-brokered deals, while Sudan has pledged to follow suit.

In return, the US president fulfilled a decades-old goal of Morocco by backing its contested sovereignty in Western Sahara.

The move infuriated the Algerian-backed pro-independence Polisario Front,

which controls about one fifth of the desert territory that once was a Spanish colony.

Kushner will be heading an American delegation, and during his visit to Rabat a series of agreements will be signed between Morocco and Israel, according to officials.

Negotiations leading to Morocco's resumption of ties with Israel included the opening of a US consulate in Western Sahara, and US investments which Moroccan media described as "colossal".

At the same time Israel and Morocco are due to reopen diplomatic offices and activate economic cooperation between them.

Morocco closed its liaison office in Tel Aviv in 2000, at the start of the second Palestinian intifada, or uprising.

King Mohammed VI has said Morocco will remain an advocate for the Palestinians, but the Palestinians like the Polisario have cried foul and condemned the normalisation announcement.

Morocco has sought to temper the anger by insisting that relations with Israel are not new.

"The new agreement is merely the formalisation of a de facto partnership between Morocco and Israel dating back 60 years," said Moroccan media boss Ahmed Charai.

In a commentary published earlier this month in the Jerusalem Post, he said the two countries had a "shared history", adding that he was "overcome with pride and gratitude" when the deal was announced.

"It is indeed the case that the two states have assisted each other vitally for decades," Charai wrote.

"Not only did intelligence and security cooperation help Israel defend itself in the 1967 Six-Day War and Morocco win its Sahara war a few years later, quiet Moroccan diplomacy proved instrumental in fostering peace between Egypt and Israel," he added.

Morocco is home to North Africa's largest Jewish community, which has been there since ancient times and grew with the arrival of Jews expelled from Spain by Catholic kings from 1492.

It reached about 250,000 in the late 1940s, 10 percent of the national population, but many Jews left after the creation of Israel in 1948.

About 3,000 Jews remain in Morocco, and the Casablanca community is one of the country's most active.

Israel meanwhile is home to 700,000 Jews of Moroccan origin.

Although ties between the two countries were suspended in the year 2000, trade between Israel and Morocco was not.

Between 2014 and 2017 the volume of trade exchanges stood at \$149 million, according to statistics published by Moroccan newspapers.



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[Middle-East](#)

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[Morocco](#)

[Israel](#)

Kushner to lead US delegation to Israel, Morocco

[US nuclear submarine passes through Strait of Hormuz](#)

Mon, 2020-12-21 19:49

LONDON: A US Navy nuclear submarine passed through the Strait of Hormuz on Monday and entered the Arabian Gulf in the latest show of military strength from Washington in the region.

The USS Georgia, which can carry dozens of land-attack cruise missiles, was accompanied by two guided-missile cruisers, the US Navy said.

The narrow waters of the Strait of Hormuz separate Iran from the Arabian Peninsula and are the route through which a large quantity of the world's crude oil supplies pass on ships. The strait has often been a flashpoint of regional tensions with Iran, with Tehran threatening to close the passage in previous escalations with the US and its allies in the Gulf.

JUST IN: [#USNavy](#)'s [#USSGeorgia](#) transits [#StraitofHormuz](#) with cruisers [#USSPortRoyal](#) and [#USSPhilippineSea](#). Georgia's presence in [@US5thFleet](#) demonstrates the fleet's ability to operate wherever international law allows. [#forcetobereckonedwith](#)

DETAILS <https://t.co/P0bIHE2XC6> pic.twitter.com/ys8cBbnm7k

– U.S. Navy (@USNavy) [December 21, 2020](#)

“As an inherently flexible maneuver force, capable of supporting routine and contingency operations, Georgia’s presence demonstrates the United States’ commitment to regional partners and maritime security with a full spectrum of capabilities to remain ready to defend against any threat at any time,” the US Navy said.

The US has flexed its military muscles in the Gulf in recent weeks to warn Iran and reassure America’s Gulf allies at a time of transition in Washington. The aircraft carrier USS Nimitz arrived in the Gulf in late November, and two B-52 bombers recently flew over the Middle East.

On Sunday, the head of US Central Command (Centcom), which oversees US forces in the region, said Washington is “prepared to react” if Iran carries out an attack to mark one year since the killing of Iranian commander Gen. Qassem Soleimani.

“We are prepared to defend ourselves, our friends and partners in the region, and we’re prepared to react if necessary,” Gen. Kenneth McKenzie said.

*With AFP



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US B-52H bombers fly to Middle East in mission to deter Iran
US Navy official says 'uneasy deterrence' reached with Iran