

Morocco sees travel mayhem after snap movement restrictions

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RABAT: Morocco's roads and transport hubs saw chaotic scenes after authorities announced snap movement restrictions affecting eight cities and towns to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus.

The measures shutting off all entry and exit to the cities, which together account for more than half of Morocco's population, were announced on Sunday, just five hours before they came into effect at midnight (2300GMT).

A joint statement from the interior and health ministries said the new restrictions applied until further notice to economic capital Casablanca and tourist capital Marrakesh as well as port city and second economic hub Tangiers, along with Fez, Tetouan, Meknes, Berrechid and Settat.

Local media reported that there were several road accidents after the announcement, adding there were still traffic jams on the Marrakesh-Ouarzazate mountain route on Monday morning due to the high volume of traffic.

There was mayhem as people converged on Casablanca's main bus station on Sunday evening, while the train station in nearby Mohammedia was still crowded on Monday, AFP correspondents said.

Authorities announced the restrictions after a "considerable rise" in novel coronavirus cases just days before the Muslim Eid Al-Adha holiday, when families traditionally come together.

The North African country registered record numbers of new daily infections over the weekend, with 811 cases on Saturday and 633 on Sunday.

The total number of cases in the kingdom reached 20,887 on Monday, including 316 deaths.

The decision was made "in view of the majority of citizens failing to comply with preventive measures" of social distancing and mask-wearing, the statement said.

Earlier this month, authorities had announced an easing of some restrictions imposed in March, with steps to encourage domestic tourism and facilitate travel over the Eid Al-Adha holiday.



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Morocco shuts down major cities after spike in coronavirus cases

[Report reveals extent of Qatari infiltration in Germany](#)

Mon, 2020-07-27 20:28

LONDON: A new report in German media has exposed how Qatar uses its vast wealth and charities to fund and infiltrate mosques, activate Muslim Brotherhood networks and buy influence across Germany.

The newly released information is part of a horde of confidential documents delivered to a French journalist in 2016.

Central to Doha's strategy is the Qatar Charity. One of the largest charities in the world, it has been plagued by allegations of funding extremism and anti-Semitism for years.

The leaked documents reveal that Qatar Charity has used its deep pockets to fund at least 140 mosques and Islamic centers across Germany since it began its campaign – costing an estimated €72 million (\$84.69 million).

In 2016 alone, the charity spent roughly €5 million on various construction projects in major German cities, including Berlin and Munich.

The relationship between these mosques and the Qatar Charity has become so intertwined, the investigation revealed, that at various times German mosque executives wrote directly to the charity's president to request cash payments for proposed projects.

One such example is the Arab-German Association of Ulm, which experts suspect to be Brotherhood-aligned.

The head of the association wrote directly to Qatar Charity, opening with "who builds a mosque, Allah builds a house in paradise," before requesting funding to buy a property and build a mosque, followed by the association's bank details.

Christian Chesnot and Georges Malbrunot, the French journalists who revealed the extent of Qatari infiltration into Germany, are clear that it is part of a wider foreign policy strategy by Doha that mobilizes Brotherhood networks at a grassroots level while using Qatar's huge cash reserves to buy leverage at a governmental level.

They said as Qatar has found itself increasingly isolated in the Gulf – due to its terrorist financing and extremism – it is now looking further afield to spread its influence.

Viewing the European country as a potential powerful ally, Chesnot and Malbrunot said in exchange for German support, Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani promised billions of euros of investment.

This, they said, is part of a dual strategy that has already played out in France: "Religious infiltration from Qatar, coupled with an intensification of economic and political relationships."



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Londoners continue protest against Qatari emir's visit to Britain
Mauritania investigates gifting of island to former Qatari Emir

[Kuwaiti man arrested after slapping Egyptian cashier](#)

Sun, 2020-07-26 23:45

CAIRO: A Kuwaiti citizen has been arrested on Sunday after slapping an Egyptian cashier three times at a supermarket in Kuwait.

The case has been referred to a misdemeanour court, Ahram Online reported.

Footage of the attack, captured on a surveillance camera, showed the attacker slapping a worker across the face at the Sabah Al-Ahmad cooperative supermarket.

The video has gone viral and prompted backlash from social media users who described the attack as “racist” and “inhumane.”

A woman can be seen intervening to stop the Kuwaiti man from assaulting the cashier further.

The supermarket’s head, Nasser Al-Otaibi, announced that he is resigning in objection to the abuse that the worker faced, according to a voice note that was circulated on his behalf.

Al-Otaibi said he resigned in protest at the abuse that expat workers face at the hands of some Kuwaitis.



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Hundreds of Egyptians flown home from Kuwait in latest coronavirus repatriation operation Kuwaiti actress Hayat Al-Fahad triggers uproar with call for expat ban over coronavirus

[**Sudan to deploy troops to Darfur after**](#)

killings

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Sun, 2020-07-26 19:27

KHARTOUM: Sudan's prime minister said Sunday the country would send security forces to conflict-stricken Darfur to "protect citizens and the farming season."

Abdalla Hamdok's announcement came two days after gunmen in the region killed at least 20 civilians, including children, as they returned to their fields for the first time in years, the latest in a string of violent incidents. The impoverished western region has seen years of conflict since an ethnic minority uprising prompted the government to launch a scorched-earth campaign that left 300,000 people dead and displaced 2.5 million.

"A joint security force will be deployed in the five states of the Darfur region to protect citizens during the farming season," Hamdok's office said in a statement after he met a delegation of women from the region.

The force will include army and police forces, it said.

Violence in Darfur has eased since Bashir's ouster by the army amid mass protests against his rule last year, with a preliminary peace deal signed in January between the government and a coalition of nine rebel groups, including factions from the region.

Farmers displaced in the conflict have since started to return to their land under a government-sponsored deal reached two months ago, in time for the July-November planting season.

But bloodshed has continued, particularly over land rights, according to expert Adam Mohammad.

"The question of land is one cause of the conflict," he said.

"During the war, peasants fled their lands and villages to camps, and nomads replaced them and settled there."

On Friday, armed men drove into a village and killed 20 civilians returning to their fields for the first time in years, an eyewitness and a tribal chief told AFP.

In late June and early July, hundreds of protesters camped for days outside a government building in the Central Darfur town of Nertiti to demand that the government beef up security after multiple killings and looting incidents on farmland and properties.

Bashir is wanted by the International Criminal Court over charges of genocide and crimes against humanity in the conflict.



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Gunmen kill at least 20 farmers in Sudan's Darfur, says tribal chief Spike in deaths in Darfur points to coronavirus' invisible spread

[Yemen flooding kills 14, washes away houses](#)

Author:

Sun, 2020-07-26 21:05

AL-MUKALLA: Heavy rains and flash flooding hit almost all Yemeni provinces in the last couple of days, killing at least 14 people and washing away dozens of houses, local media and local officials said on Sunday.

The largest death toll was recorded in the western province of Hodeidah, where 13 people died and more than 35 houses in three districts were

destroyed.

Images on social media showed floods washing away houses, farms and cars in poor districts of Hodeidah. Flooding killed one person and ruined houses and farms in the province of Ibb, local media and residents said.

Heavy rains also hit the capital Sanaa, causing floods that affected many residential areas. "The damage in all affected areas is huge," Salem Al-Khanbashi, Yemen's deputy prime minister, told Arab News.

The flooding damaged power lines in the southern province of Lahj and wiped out farms in Hadramout and Abyan, he said, adding that the National Emergency Committee had convened to discuss how to handle the damage and offer urgent assistance to the affected areas.

"The international donors and organizations should urgently help us. We cannot handle this problem on our own."

On Saturday the country's National Meteorological Center renewed its warning to the public to avoid flood courses and to avoid traveling this week, predicting a new wave of heavy rains, strong winds and flash floods in many provinces.

Last week a downpour that lasted for several hours ruined more than 90 houses in the historical city of Shibam, which is entirely made of mud, prompting residents and local officials into appealing for international help to rescue the city from collapse. Yemenis are also bracing themselves for further havoc in the form of a new locust invasion, as rainstorms create ideal breeding conditions.

Yemen has been embroiled in conflict since late 2014, when the Iran-backed Houthis seized control of Sanaa and expanded across the country. The fighting has created the world's worst humanitarian crisis and devastated the national economy.

Despite the torrential floods, fighting raged on the main frontline across Yemen on Saturday and Sunday in the provinces of Hodeidah, Al-Bayda and Marib.

Yemen's Defense Ministry said that army troops and allied tribesmen liberated a number of locations in Qania, in the central province of Al-Bayda.

Brig. Ahmed Al-Nageh, the commander of 117 Infantry Brigade in Al-Bayda, said government forces, backed by Saudi-led coalition warplanes, engaged in heavy fighting with the Houthis in Qania, adding that the warplanes targeted Houthi military personnel and equipment in Al-Sabel and Masouda mountains. Clashes were reported in Hodeida, where government forces pushed back Houthi incursions in Durihimi and Jah districts, local media reported.

Yemen is also battling the coronavirus pandemic, which has so far killed 474 people and infected 1,674 in government-controlled areas, according to the latest figures from the Aden-based National Coronavirus Committee.

Local and international health experts believe that the actual number of coronavirus patients is five times higher than the official figures.



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