

[UAE allows citizens and residents to travel abroad](#)

Fri, 2020-07-03 18:47

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates will allow both citizens and residents to travel abroad, the state news agency reported on Friday. In March, the UAE suspended all inbound and outbound passenger flights and the transit of airline passengers in the UAE, allowing only cargo and emergency evacuation flights.



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UAE says residents, citizens cannot travel abroad for tourism yet UAE reports 400 new coronavirus infections, Abu Dhabi reopens beaches, parks

Settlers and Palestinians unite in opposition to Israeli annexation

Author:

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1593789793671423300

Fri, 2020-07-03 15:22

GUSH ETZION JUNCTION, Palestinian Territories: Some Israeli settlers agree with their Palestinian neighbors in the occupied West Bank that the Jewish state's plan to annex part of the territory would undermine their years-long reconciliation efforts.

Palestinian Khaled Abu Awwad and Israeli rabbi Shaul Judelman live just a few miles away from each other in the southern West Bank, the former in Bethlehem and the latter in Tekoa, a settlement considered illegal by the international community.

The two are the joint directors of Shorashim-Judur, or Roots in Hebrew and Arabic, a movement founded in 2014 to establish dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians sharing the West Bank, which has been occupied by Israel since 1967.

US President Donald Trump's controversial peace plan paves the way for Israel to annex parts of the West Bank, including Jewish settlements considered illegal under international law.

In a statement this week Roots said unilateral annexation would constitute an "aggression" that would "stand in opposition to the principle of mutual respect" which is "the foundation for advancing peace and security."

Roots has its headquarters in Gush Etzion, a bloc of two dozen settlements and outposts near Bethlehem that some have speculated will be among the first Israel would annex.

At a recent meeting there Abu Awwad and Judelman shared the concerns they have if Israel went ahead with its annexation plans.

On a terrace surrounded by olive trees, Abu Awwad compared annexation to a "declaration of war" that could bring violence.

"Any unilateral decision cannot be a sign of reconciliation but on the contrary, raises the level of the conflict," he said.

Sitting next to him, Judelman said "it is not enough to oppose annexation, people from both societies must unite and propose something else."

"But it takes political leaders with courage to break the iron wall between our two societies," said the rabbi, his head covered with a large skullcap.

"We have a generation of Israelis who never met a Palestinian but only saw a terrorist on TV, and a generation of Palestinians who only saw an Israeli soldier and this is what Israelis are to him," said the rabbi, his head covered with a large skullcap.

Judelman said the 1993 Oslo peace accords – which split up the West Bank into three zones – created a divide between Israelis and Palestinians by saying "you are here and you are there."

"It cannot work because both peoples are connected to the entire land," he said.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's center-right coalition government had set July 1 as the date it could begin implementing annexation but the date passed with no announcement.

His office said separate talks were ongoing with US officials "on the application of sovereignty" and with Israeli security chiefs.

Israeli annexation plans sparked sharp criticism in the international community, Arab world and within Israel itself, with the lack of apparent progress on the issue raising speculation Netanyahu was not seeking immediate action.

One of the many thorny issues in the possible annexation move was the question citizenship for Palestinians in areas Israel annexed.

"Any plan that does not put front and center the equal rights and mutual benefits that every Palestinian and Israeli deserves will not bring us closer to peace but rather distances us from it," the Roots statement said.

To Judelman, annexation is just the latest attempt of one side to force a solution on the other since the collapse of the Oslo accords, which were meant to be temporary and lead to the formation of a Palestinian state.



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Hamas, Fatah join hands against Israel's annexation plan Palestinians rally

Algeria says France to return remains of 24 resistance fighters

Author:

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Thu, 2020-07-02 14:20

ALGIERS: Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune on Thursday said France will return the remains of 24 resistance fighters who were killed during its colonization of the North African country.

"Within a few hours Algerian military planes will fly in from France and land at the Houari Boumediene international airport with the remains of 24 (members) of the popular resistance," Tebboune said during a military ceremony.

Tebboune said some of the remains belonged to "leaders" of the resistance movement who were killed in the 19th century fighting against France which occupied and ruled Algeria for 132 years.

In his speech, Tebboune said these resistance fighters "had been deprived of their natural and human right to be buried for more than 170 years."

One of the leaders whose remains are to be returned is Sheikh Bouzian, who was captured in 1849 by the French, shot and decapitated.

The remains of two other key figures of the resistance – Bou Amar Ben Kedida and Si Mokhtar Ben Kouider Al Titraoui – are also among those expected back in Algeria.

The country won independence from France in 1962 after eight years of bitter war that left some 1.5 million Algerians dead.

Emmanuel Macron, the first French president to be born after the war, made his first official visit to Algeria in December 2017, announcing that he came as a "friend" despite France's historically prickly ties with its former colony.

At the time he told news website Tout sur l'Algerie that he was "ready" to see his country hand back the skulls of Algerian resistance fighters.

Algerian and French academics have long campaigned for the return of 37 skulls held at the Musee de l'Homme in Paris.

In December 2019, Macron said that "colonialism was a grave mistake" and called for turning the page on the past.

During his presidential election campaign Macron had created a storm by calling France's colonization of Algeria a "crime against humanity."



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Ex-Bouteflika allies handed heavy jail terms in Algeria graft trial

[Jordan announces smoking crackdown in coronavirus fight](#)

Author:

Thu, 2020-07-02 18:07

AMMAN: Jordan has extended a ban on cigarettes in closed public spaces to all forms of smoking, citing the fight against COVID-19 in a country with one of the world's highest smoking rates.

"In order to protect the health and safety of citizens, especially given the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath, smoking of all forms (cigarettes, electronic cigarettes and shisha) is banned in closed public places," the health ministry said in a statement on Wednesday.

The World Health Organization has long ranked Jordan's 10 million inhabitants among the world's biggest smokers.

The Guardian last month published figures showing that the kingdom had surpassed Indonesia to have the highest smoking rates in the world, with more than eight out of 10 men regularly smoking or otherwise consuming nicotine. Citing the WHO, the health ministry said that "smokers and passive smokers are more vulnerable to being infected by COVID-19, with stronger symptoms." Jordan has registered 1,133 cases of the COVID-19 illness, including nine deaths.

The kingdom introduced a cigarette ban in public places in 2008, but the new regulations cover electronic cigarettes and shisha waterpipes popular in the region.

However they only apply in "fully closed" public areas.

"The decision doesn't bother me much because I don't smoke arghileh (shisha) in closed places," said waterpipe enthusiast Khaled Al-Shamhuri.

"The smoking ban in public places is old but wasn't enforced."

Coffee shop employee Hassan Al-Shadfan said the new rules would "negatively affect us."

"The cafe is a closed space and most clients don't just come to eat or drink tea and coffee, most smoke arghileh," he said.

But Ahmad Rubbaa, owner of a cafeteria selling cigarettes, was less concerned.

"A smoker is a smoker wherever they are, no law can stop them," he said.

"I don't think this will affect tobacco sales."



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Jordan injects \$705.2m into its private sector
Jordan green lights entertainment activities in resorts

[Iran to compensate downed passenger plane victims' families: Sweden](#)

Thu, 2020-07-02 16:50

STOCKHOLM: Sweden said Thursday that Iran had agreed to compensate the families of the foreign victims of a Ukrainian passenger plane that was shot down outside Tehran in January.

The Boeing 737 aircraft was struck by two missiles and crashed shortly after taking off from Tehran airport on January 8, killing all 176 people on board. The Islamic republic admitted days later that its forces accidentally shot down the Kiev-bound jetliner.

"We have signed an agreement of mutual understanding that we will now negotiate with Iran about amends, compensation to the victims' next of kin," Sweden's Foreign Minister Ann Linde told news agency TT, in a statement confirmed by her press secretary to AFP.

Linde said the agreement had been reached after negotiations with Iran and the countries with citizens among the victims.

While it was still unclear what sums would be paid out, Linde said there was "no doubt" that Iran would follow through on the compensation.

Among the victims, many were Iranian-Canadians, but there were also victims from Sweden, Britain, Afghanistan, and Ukraine, including the nine crew members.



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Iran to send black boxes of downed Ukraine jet to FranceIran says black boxes of downed Ukraine plane of 'no help'