

# [UAE's Gargash: Turkey sees strategic space for historical dreams in the Arab world](#)

Sat, 2020-06-20 18:11

LONDON: Turkey sees in the Arab world a strategic space for its historical dreams, UAE Minister for State of Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash tweeted on Saturday.

"Amr Moussa's statement about the Turkish strategic threat to the Arab world did not come from a vacuum, but rather diagnoses of Ankara's policy towards its Arab surroundings," Gargash tweeted.

"(It is) an important statement in its timing that highlights the Turkish expansionist strategy and its exploitation of the state of weakness experienced by the Arab regional system," he added.

In another tweet, Gargash said: "Over the years, relations of neighborliness and respect have strengthened economic and political ties between Turkey and its Arab region."

"(They have been) replaced by a program of expansion and leadership that sees the Arab world as a strategic space for (Turkish) historical dreams, a policy far from wisdom that will implicate Ankara and its interests in the coming stages."

Gargash's tweets come soon after Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi ordered his army to be ready to carry out any mission inside or outside the country to protect its national security amid tensions over Turkey's intervention in neighboring Libya.

Turkey supports the internationally recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli, which, with Turkish support, has reversed a 14-month assault on the capital by Khalifa Haftar's eastern-based Libyan National Army (LNA).



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Egypt's El-Sisi orders army to be ready for missions abroad amid tensions over Libya Tripoli government to boycott Arab League Libya talks

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## [Iran coronavirus death toll tops 9,500](#)

Author:

AFP

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1592664796699525800

Sat, 2020-06-20 12:40

TEHRAN: Iranian health authorities Saturday announced more than 100 new deaths from coronavirus and another 2,000 cases of the illness, as the country's fight against the pandemic entered its fifth month.

Iran reported its first coronavirus cases on February 19, and it has since struggled to contain the outbreak, the worst in the Middle East.

The Islamic republic's official figures have shown an upward trajectory in new cases of infection since early May. Health ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said there were 115 fatalities in the past 24 hours, bringing the country's death toll to 9,507. There were also 2,322 new cases of infection, with the total number of confirmed cases now at 202,584, she added. There has been skepticism at home and abroad about Iran's official figures, with concerns the real toll could be much higher. President Hassan Rouhani on Saturday warned that stress created by the disease could leave people "depressed." He called on experts and artists to prepare Iranians mentally "to fight the virus for a long time." "Without perseverance and continuity, we risk losing all our gains," he said during a meeting of a taskforce set up to fight the pandemic. Rouhani also confirmed his government's decision to allow provinces to make their own decisions on restrictive measures, implemented with "the president's approval." Seven of Iran's 31 provinces – Khuzestan, Khorasan Razavi, Kermanshah, West and East Azerbaijan, Golestan and Kurdistan – are currently "red," the highest level on its color-coded risk scale, Lari said.



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## Deaths in Aden drop by 43 percent, officials say

Fri, 2020-06-19 23:04

AL-MUKALLA: Deaths from the coronavirus and other diseases in Yemen's southern port city of Aden have dropped by 43 percent in the first 16 days of this month, local government officials and medics said on Friday.

The UN said that the fatality rate was still "alarmingly" high.

Official figures showed that dengue fever, chikungunya, ebola, malaria, pneumonic plague and other illnesses killed 1,823 people in May.

Abdulla bin Ghouth, a professor of epidemiology at Hadramout University's College of Medicine, said that the total number of deaths over the first 16 days of June was 484 compared to 861 during the same period in May, based on burial permits from the government's civil authority office in Aden.

"The logical explanation is that this is the beginning of the ebb of the epidemic in Aden," Bin Ghouth told Arab News. "We do not want to generalize this conclusion as we need to follow the epidemiological curve of cases for another three weeks in addition to bed occupancy of isolation centers in Aden."

The internationally recognized government of Yemen in May declared Aden an "infested" city due to the rapid spread of the coronavirus, as heavy rains and flash floods battered the city's infrastructures.

Local health workers say that they have detected a decrease in the number of patients and deaths in Aden since the beginning of this month. Mukhtar Saeed Nasser, a physician at Al-Jumhuriya Hospital in Aden, told Arab News that daily deaths at the hospital were now at three compared to 15 to 20 in late April and early May.

"There is a great decrease in the number of deaths compared to the early days of Ramadan. Most of today's deaths are older people," Nasser said. He attributed the drop to better health services, more medical staff, effective awareness campaigns and medical and logistical support from international organizations such as Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF).

On Thursday, the national coronavirus committee reported seven new cases and four deaths in Hadramout, Lahj and Taiz, bringing the total number of cases to 909, including 248 deaths and 273.



## Medical assistance

An air-borne shipment of 43 tons of laboratory supplies, ventilators, test kits, PCR machines and PPE arrived in Yemen on Friday to help the country's fragile health system stem the spread of coronavirus, the International Initiative on COVID-19 in Yemen (IICY) said in a statement seen by Arab News.

Auke Lootsma, acting Humanitarian Coordinator in Yemen, was quoted as saying: "This donation comes at a critical time. It will have a massive and immediate impact on the ground helping to fill the gaps in Yemen's hospitals and laboratories nationwide."

The shipment is a donation to the World Health Organization (WHO) facilitated by the Hayel Saeed Anam Foundation on behalf of the International Initiative on COVID-19 in Yemen (IICY), a collaborative partnership of multinational companies and the UN.

Labs across Yemen have recently complained about a severe shortage of coronavirus testing kits, which has hampered the government's efforts to fight the spread of the disease.



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Coronavirus medical aid arrives in Yemen  
Yemeni tribes in Al-Bayda province  
revolt against Houthis

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## Morocco records biggest single-day rise in COVID-19 cases

Author:

Reuters

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1592590103174398300

Fri, 2020-06-19 18:02

RABAT: Morocco's Health Ministry reported 539 new coronavirus cases on Friday, the biggest daily rise so far, most of them in a cluster north of Rabat.

There are now 9,613 confirmed cases in Morocco, with a mortality rate of 2.2% and a recovery rate of 84.5%, according to official figures.

The government this month eased some lockdown measures in regions with low infection rates, but kept in place a ban on people leaving their homes without permits in areas with more cases, including some big cities.

The area around the cluster, some 150 km north of the capital, is covered by the permits but lockdowns are harder to enforce in rural and semi-rural areas.

Most businesses are working again, but restaurants, cafes, cinemas and other enterprises in the vital services sector remain shut along with airports.

Businesses have been asked to test all their employees, as the country increased its daily testing capacity to over 17,500.



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Morocco artisans fear 'knockout punch' from virus  
Morocco prisoners make masks for fellow inmates

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## [Algeria cracks down on activists in bid to break protest movement](#)

Author:

Amal Belalloufi, with Philippe Agret in Tunis | AFP

ID:

1592577756443559500

Fri, 2020-06-19 14:37

ALGIERS: Algeria has intensified a crackdown on an anti-government protest movement, targeting social media users in a bid to stop demonstrations

resuming once coronavirus restrictions end.

Weekly protests rocked the North African country for more than a year and only stopped in March due to the novel coronavirus outbreak.

The "Hirak" protest movement caused the downfall of former president Abdelaziz Bouteflika in April 2019 after 20 years in power. It has continued demanding an overhaul of Algeria's governance system, in place since independence from France in 1962.

Authorities have made about 200 arrests linked to the protests since the country's coronavirus restrictions came into effect three months ago, according to Said Salhi, vice president of the Algerian League for the Defense of Human Rights.

"The authorities have taken advantage of the lull to arrest the maximum number of activists," he said.

Protesters are being pursued for "crimes of opinion and expression connected to posts on social media, particularly Facebook," he said, with some of their homes searched and mobile phones confiscated.

Most of the authorities' actions are based on changes to the penal code that were passed in April amid the health crisis and have been denounced by human rights activists.

Salhi called the moves "an irresponsible attack, verging on provocation, against fundamental human rights."

On Thursday, more than 20 opposition activists were summoned to appear in seven separate hearings, mostly in trials that had been delayed due to the pandemic.

Those accused include figures in the protest movement, political activists, journalists and people accused of mocking the regime online.

"The government doesn't believe in change, it refuses to listen to the people," lawyer Mustapha Bouchachi was quoted as saying this week in French-language daily Liberte.

"In my opinion, it is making these arrests to break the Hirak," he added.

According to detainees' rights association CNLD, 60 prisoners of conscience are currently jailed.

In a sign the government might be nervous about the public mood, several academics rushed to its defense in official media this week, accusing a "neo-Hirak" of being "in the service of a foreign plan."

But press freedom group Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has called on the Algerian authorities to "stop using the justice system to muzzle the media."

"The increase in legal proceedings against Algerian journalists is extremely worrying and indicates a blatant deterioration of press freedom in Algeria," RSF director for North Africa, Souhaieb Khayati, said in a statement.

Four Algerian journalists were prosecuted or sentenced to prison this week. The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists has also urged Algerian authorities to "stop using the COVID-19 pandemic as an excuse to clamp down on press freedom."

Some of Algeria's coronavirus lockdown measures have been gradually lifted since June 7.

But gatherings, including the weekly Hirak marches, are still strictly forbidden.

Algeria has officially reported 11,385 cases and 811 deaths from the COVID-19 illness.

Provincial areas have seen sporadic mobilizations in support of detainees in



recent weeks, particularly in the northeastern Kabylie region, while streets in Algiers and Oran have remained quiet. Protesters in Kabylie's two main towns Bejaia and Tizi Ouzou on Friday called for the government to step down, videos shared online showed. The CNLD reported about 10 arrests were made in Bejaia and several more in Tizi Ouzou. An anti-government coalition within the Pact for the Democratic Alternative has urged Algerians to "stay mobilized but vigilant in order to engage forcefully in the resumption of peaceful protests" when the health situation allows. And although there were calls on social media to restart weekly protests on Friday, activists, lawyers, student associations and political parties warned of the health risks. But instead of crushing the unprecedented, leaderless protest movement, the crackdown could have the opposite effect. "There is a general feeling of 'hogra'" prevailing among the population, said Salhi, using an Algerian term that refers to injustice and abuse of power. "Some are already planning to go back to the streets" despite the coronavirus risk, he said.



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Algeria to ease coronavirus restrictions on Sunday  
Algeria to release 2 protest leaders, says opposition politician