

Israeli taxi app sued for discrimination against Arab drivers

Author:

Sun, 2020-02-23 01:20

LONDON: Local rights groups in Jerusalem have sued Israeli on-demand taxi app Gett for offering what they allege is an option designed to discriminate against Arab drivers.

Gett, which also has operations in the US and the UK, offers its users in Jerusalem a unique service called Mehadrin, which refers to the most rigorous level of Jewish standards.

The service offers users the option to choose a taxi that is not driven on the Sabbath. Palestinian Arab drivers in the city are largely Muslim or Christian, and often work on the Sabbath.

While Gett claims that it does not discriminate on the basis of religion and that drivers of any faith can register, lawyer Asaf Pink calls the Mehadrin option a "proxy for a racist service that provides taxis with Jewish drivers."

FASTFACT

Gett, which also has operations in the US and the UK, offers its users in Jerusalem a unique service called Mehadrin, which refers to the most rigorous level of Jewish standards.

Pink, along with the Israel Religious Action Center, sought a private investigation into the service before submitting the case, sending in undercover people posing as potential drivers.

Herzl Moshe, Gett's Jerusalem representative, allegedly said he would never allow an Arab driver to register with the Mehadrin service.

"It's for people who don't want an Arab driver," he said in comments recorded during the private investigation.

Anat Hoffman, executive director of the Israel Religious Action Center, claimed that religion is only being used by Gett as a cover for racial discrimination.

"Using Judaism to justify racism isn't Jewish," Hoffman said. "Racism by any other name smells just as foul."

Gett insists that its policies are not discriminatory. "Any driver, regardless of religious belief, can drive in this fleet," said a spokesperson for Gett.



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Iraq's Sadr warns MPs against rejecting new govt
Sudan to probe violence against Khartoum protesters

[Iraq's Sadr warns MPs against rejecting new govt](#)

Author:

Sat, 2020-02-22 23:39

NAJAF: Populist cleric Moqtada Al-Sadr returned to Iraq on Saturday with a threat to organize protests outside Parliament unless lawmakers back the government of Prime Minister-designate Mohammad Allawi in a confidence vote. The cleric with a cult-like following in Iraq has thrown his weight behind the appointment of Allawi, despite the premier's rejection by a protest movement Sadr once backed.

The onetime anti-US militia leader whose supporters form the largest bloc in the Parliament had spent most of the past few months in neighboring Iran but came back to whip up support for Allawi's government lineup.

Sadr demanded that parliament approve the line-up in the coming days.

"If the session does not take place this week, or if lawmakers don't (back) a

transparent Iraqi Cabinet in a vote ... then this will require a demonstration of a million people,” he tweeted.

“Sit-ins around the Green Zone (where Parliament is located) will have to be used to exert pressure,” he said.

Allawi has called for a vote of confidence to be held on Monday and has been backed by his predecessor Adel Abdul Mahdi, who bowed out as prime minister in December in the face of pressure from the street.

But the constitutional position is unclear.

Deputy Parliament Speaker Hassan Karim Al-Kaabi, who is close to Sadr, told Iraqi media that Abdul Mahdi’s request for an extraordinary session to hold the confidence vote was binding.

But Parliament Speaker Mohammed Halbusi said he has not yet agreed to convene the session and several lawmakers from Iraq’s Sunni Arab minority said they would boycott any vote.



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Author:

Sat, 2020-02-22 23:36

CAIRO: Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok on Saturday ordered an investigation into a violent crackdown by security forces on protesters in Khartoum.

Hamdok said in a televised speech: "I decided to form an investigative committee in the events that occurred on Feb. 20-21."

He said Attorney General Taj-Elsir Ali would head the committee and a final report would be issued within seven days.

On Thursday, Sudanese security forces used teargas and batons to disperse thousands of protesters.

They were demanding the reinstatement of army officers dismissed for refusing to crack down on demonstrations against former President Omar Bashir, witnesses said.

A doctors' committee linked to the opposition said in a statement that at least 17 people were wounded, and many of the wounded were hit by teargas canisters.

HIGHLIGHT

Mohamed Seddik, an iconic figure of the uprising, is among those dismissed last week and one of several young army officers who had refused to participate in the crackdown on demonstrations in front of the Defense Ministry calling for the removal of Bashir.

The military removed Bashir from office and arrested him last April after months of demonstrations, bringing an end to his 30 years of autocratic rule. But dozens of protesters were killed during crackdowns on the demonstrations, and dozens more died last June when security forces cleared a sit-in at which protesters pushed for further reforms.

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Huge locust outbreak in East Africa reaches South Sudan
ICC trial in The Hague
one option for Sudan's Bashir -minister

[Thousands hit streets of Algiers on protest movement anniversary](#)

Author:

Sat, 2020-02-22 23:34

ALGIERS: Several thousand people gathered in the Algerian capital on Saturday on the first anniversary of a protest movement that seeks an overhaul of the political system and forced the former president to resign.

Protesters shouted "the people want the fall of the regime" and "we have come to get rid of you," referring to the country's rulers.

"No to military power, civil not military state" was written on one banner, referring to the authority exercised by the high military command since the country's independence from France in 1962.

Mass protests first erupted on Feb. 22 last year, in response to then-President Abdelaziz Bouteflika announcing he intended a run for a fifth term – despite being debilitated by a 2013 stroke.

Less than six weeks later, he stepped down after losing the support of the

then-army chief in the face of enormous weekly demonstrations. Despite hordes – diplomats said “millions” – turning out after Bouteflika’s fall to demand an overhaul of the entire system, the military maintained a political stranglehold in the months that followed. Police were deployed around the Grande Poste in central Algiers in numbers unusual for a Saturday, as people responded to calls on social media to celebrate the first anniversary of the “Hirak” protest movement. Friday had seen the 53rd straight weekly demonstration, with Algerians flooding the streets of Algiers and numerous other cities across the country. Even as the unprecedented movement has thinned in numbers since December, protesters still turn out in droves on a weekly basis. President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, a former prime minister under Bouteflika who was elected in December, had recently claimed that “things are starting to calm” in the streets and that “the Hirak got almost everything it wanted.”



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Neighbours to meet in Algiers on Libya crisis More than 80 detained in Algiers protest, says rights group

[Financial Action Task Force tightens](#)

screws on Tehran over terror financing

Sat, 2020-02-22 02:20

PARIS: An international agency monitoring terrorism funding announced tough new financial scrutiny of Iran on Friday and added seven countries to a watch list.

Pakistan, meanwhile, won a reprieve from the Financial Action Task Force at its meetings in Paris this week. The monitoring body gave Pakistan's government another four months to crack down on terrorism financing and did not put the country on a damaging "black list."

Iran and North Korea are the only two countries currently on the agency's black list. That means international financial transactions with those countries are closely scrutinized, making it costly and cumbersome to do business with them. International creditors can also place restrictions on lending to black-listed countries.

The FATF decided on Friday to further tighten the screws on Iran, imposing extra measures that could require audits or more transactions and make it even harder for foreign investors to do business there.

The group made the decision because Iran failed to fulfill its promises to the FATF despite repeated warnings. In a statement, the organization said that Iran hasn't done enough to criminalize terrorist financing, require transparency in wire transfers or freeze terrorist assets targeted by UN sanctions.

Opinion

This section contains relevant reference points, placed in (Opinion field)

The head of Iran's central bank, Abdolnasser Hemmati, said the decision will not affect the country.

"Such incidents will create no problem for Iran's foreign trade and currency," he said in a statement. Hemmati said the FATF decision was based on the "enmity" of the US and Israel toward Iran.

Pakistan, meanwhile, has been trying to get off the FATF gray list, the color code for countries that are only partially fulfilling international rules for fighting terrorism financing and money laundering.

Pakistan's government has been working to shore up the country's faltering economy and attract foreign investment and loans, making the FATF's assessment especially important.

The FATF said that Pakistan had fulfilled 14 of 27 steps to get off the watch

list, but still must do more to track money transfers and investigate and prosecute terrorism financiers.

The Pakistani government said in a statement that it “stands committed for taking all necessary action required” to fulfill the remaining steps. “A strategy in this regard has been formulated and is being implemented.”

The Financial Action Task Force also put seven new countries on its gray list because of gaps or failures in stemming the financing of terrorist groups or money laundering. The countries – Albania, Barbados, Jamaica, Mauritius, Myanmar, Nicaragua and Uganda – were ordered to take a series of legal and other steps to be removed from the list and avoid further financial punishment.



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