

# Beirut shaken by 'barbaric' protests crackdown

Author:

Reuters

ID:

1579195797206920500

Thu, 2020-01-16 17:18

BEIRUT: An upsurge of violence in Lebanon's protests against the ruling elite, with police meting out beatings and protesters hurling stones, has alarmed rights groups and whipped up public fury.

After a brief lull in largely peaceful protests since October, people filled the streets again this week, angry at a political class that has steered Lebanon into its worst economic crisis since a 1975-1990 civil war.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, police wielding batons and firing tear gas wounded and arrested dozens as protesters lit fires and smashed bank facades and ATMs, Reuters journalists saw.

"These past two nights, they (police) were really barbaric," said Cynthia Sleiman, a charity worker and protester who ended up in hospital after Wednesday night's violence in Beirut.

"I had just arrived and was looking for my friends when the policeman grabbed me, hitting me on the head and neck. I fell to the ground and blood was streaming out," she said.

Lebanon's Internal Security Forces (ISF) said they were pursuing rioters and 100 policemen were injured this week. "The force member is suffering daily in the street," ISF chief Imad Othman said on Thursday. "He is not a robot, he is a human."

A security source said at least 80 protesters were injured in two days and 72 others arrested. Many of those in detention would be released on Thursday, the source said.

Since the protests led Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri to resign in October, politicians have failed to agree a new cabinet or rescue plan for the heavily-indebted economy. The Lebanese pound has lost nearly half its value, dollar shortages have driven up prices and confidence in banks has collapsed. Azza Al-Masri, a media researcher also injured on Wednesday, said she saw a woman faint after police beat her up. "The viciousness was unlike anything I've seen," she said.

Activists believe police violence may indicate Lebanon's establishment has lost patience with protesters and is also stung by public wrath against banks, which have curbed access to savings and blocked most transfers abroad. Human Rights Watch's Beirut director Lama Fakhri told Reuters the group was concerned at excessive force by security forces amid rising frustrations on both sides. She said there was no "strong message" from government that police would be held responsible.

A Lebanese media group said 15 journalists were attacked on Wednesday. One of them was a Reuters video journalist, who was treated in hospital for head injuries and released.

On Thursday, lawyers, journalists and activists gathered at the interior

ministry and the justice palace in Beirut to complain about police violence. Interior Minister Raya Al-Hassan told reporters she had not ordered a clampdown and denounced attacks on media, while also urging understanding for police.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Beirut](#)

[Protests](#)

[Lebanon](#)

[Lebanon protests](#)

'This is your fault': UN blasts politicians over Lebanon chaos  
Lebanon's Bank Audi open to sale of Egyptian unit in new strategy

---

## [Israeli, Palestinian youth fear conflict will 'never end,' says poll](#)

Author:

AFP

ID:

1579195836506924900

Thu, 2020-01-16 16:36

GAZA: The majority of young Israelis and Palestinians believe the conflict between their peoples "will never end," according to a survey published Thursday by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Sixty five percent of Israeli millennials surveyed and 52 percent of their Palestinian counterparts said they expected the conflict to continue in perpetuity, the ICRC said in a statement.

It said they were the most pessimistic of a series of war-affected populations surveyed in a global poll of more than 16,000 people aged between 20 and 35.

The global poll found more than half feared there would be a nuclear attack in the next decade.

"In general, the results indicate that millennials are nervous about the future, and heightened tensions in the Middle East are likely to deepen these fears," the ICRC said in a statement.

The simmering conflict has been ongoing for decades and there are currently no peace talks between Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

Israel occupied the West Bank and east Jerusalem in a 1967 war and later annexed the flashpoint holy city in a move never recognized by the international community.

Gaza's Islamist rulers Hamas and allied militant groups have fought three wars with Israel since 2008.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Gaza](#)

[Israel](#)

[Palestine](#)

Palestine government, Christians slam Israel for insufficient action on church attack  
Israel turns swathes of occupied West Bank into 'nature reserves'

---

## [UN Yemen envoy Griffiths thanks all parties for truce efforts as Zinjibar pullout begins](#)

Thu, 2020-01-16 18:11

NEW YORK: UN Yemen envoy Martin Griffiths said on Thursday at the UN Security Council that any escalation of violence in Yemen could not be reduced without a political process, but thanked parties – including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – for their work toward that goal.

Griffiths made his briefing at the Security Council session after holding several consultations in the Middle East and meetings with various US officials in Washington.

It is the first session on Yemen in 2020.

Before his briefing on Thursday, Griffiths met with US Secretary of Defense Mark Esper on Wednesday.

Was pleased to host Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the [@UN](#) Secretary-General for Yemen at the Pentagon today. [@DeptofDefense](#) supports UN efforts to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in support of regional stability. [@OSE\\_Yemen](#)  
[pic.twitter.com/PwUennFaJ9](https://pic.twitter.com/PwUennFaJ9)

– Secretary of Defense Dr. Mark T. Esper (@EsperDoD) [January 15, 2020](#)

Griffiths' address came as separatists and forces loyal to the internationally-recognized government who started clashing last summer began pulling back from a key southern city, something confirmed by military officials on Thursday.

The pullout, envisaged under the Saudi-brokered Riyadh Agreement peace deal, began this week, the Yemeni officials told AP. They spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

The infighting that broke out in August between the secessionists and troops loyal to Yemeni President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi threatened their alliance in the Arab coalition that has been fighting against the country's Iranian-backed Houthi militia since 2015.

The fighting prompted Saudi Arabia to pressure both sides to the negotiating table in Riyadh, where they signed the peace agreement in November. Among other provisions, the deal stipulates that both sides pull out from Zinjibar, the capital of southern Abyan province.

*(With AP)*



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Middle East](#)

[Yemen](#)

[Houthis](#)

[Martin Griffiths](#)

[UN](#)

UN's Griffiths backs Jeddah talks between Yemeni government, southern separatists  
UN envoy Griffiths arrives in Sanaa after redeployment meetings between Yemen sides

---

## [London meeting for Ukraine plane victims urges Iran to hold responsible to account](#)

Thu, 2020-01-16 12:51

LONDON: The countries whose citizens were killed when Iran shot down a Ukrainian passenger plane demanded that authorities in Tehran bring those responsible to justice through "an independent criminal investigation" on Thursday.

They said Iran must also initiate “impartial judicial proceedings which conform to international standards” against those accountable in a joint statement issued at the Canadian High Commission in London by Canada, Ukraine, Sweden, Afghanistan and Britain.

The statement issued a five-point plan for cooperation with Iran, and called on the state to recognise its duties towards the families of the victims and other parties, including compensation.

[#LIVE](#): The foreign ministers of Canada, the Netherlands, Sweden, Ukraine, Afghanistan and the UK light candles in memory of those who died in the [#UkrainianPlaneCrash](#) in London ahead of a coordination and response meeting [@CanadianUK](#)  
<https://t.co/fqHxBR0yAi> [pic.twitter.com/KHP6aMucE0](https://pic.twitter.com/KHP6aMucE0)

– Arab News (@arabnews) [January 16, 2020](#)

[#LIVE](#): A moment of silence is observed for the victims of the [#UkrainianPlaneCrash](#) at the Canadian High Commission in London [@CanadianUK](#) [@DominicRaab](#) [@IdreesZaman](#) [@VPrystaiko](#)  
<https://t.co/fqHxBR0yAi> [pic.twitter.com/KGxzSa6yQd](https://pic.twitter.com/KGxzSa6yQd)

– Arab News (@arabnews) [January 16, 2020](#)

“Families want answers, the international community wants answers, the world is waiting for answers and we will not rest until we get them,” Canada’s Foreign Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne said at the meeting.

Iran said its military “unintentionally” shot down the jet on Jan. 8 killing all 176 people aboard, after initially repeatedly denying Western accusations that it was responsible.

The international coordination and response group for the families of the victims met at the High Commission of Canada in London, and was attended by the foreign ministers from Canada, Ukraine, Sweden, Afghanistan, the UK and the Netherlands.

The group also discussed the victim identification process and recommended that the process is conducted with dignity, transparency and according to international standards.

Champagne told a news conference after the meeting on Thursday that families of those who died needed closure and there was a need to prevent similar incidents in the future.

“When you accept full responsibility there are consequences coming from that,” he said.

Asked what pressure could be applied if Iran did not cooperate, Champagne said: "It's called the international community."

Meanwhile, Ukraine's foreign Minister Vadym Prystaiko said the bodies of all 11 Ukrainian citizens who died in the plane crash have been identified.

Earlier, the foreign ministers paid their respects to those who died when Iran shot down the Ukrainian airliner last week.

Canada's Francois-Philippe Champagne and Britain's Dominic Raab, with the foreign ministers of Ukraine, Sweden and Afghanistan each lit a candle to commemorate the victims at the Canadian High Commission, and paused for a moment of reflection before the meeting began.

A Ukrainian plane was shot down hours after Iran launched a ballistic missile attack on two military bases housing US troops in Iraq in retaliation for the killing of Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani in an American airstrike in Baghdad. No one was wounded in the attack on the bases.

Among the victims of the crash were 82 Iranians, 63 Canadians, 11 Ukrainians, 10 Swedes, four Afghans, three Germans and three British nationals.





Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Middle East](#)

[Iran](#)

[Canadian](#)

[Ukraine International Airlines](#)

[Ukraine](#)

[London](#)

[UK](#)

New footage shows Iranian missiles hitting Ukraine plane  
Downing of Ukrainian plane breathes new life into Iranian protests

---

## [Egypt forms a new team to investigate the death of Italian student Giulio Regeni](#)

Author:

Wed, 2020-01-15 21:00

CAIRO: Egypt formed a new team to investigate the death of an Italian student

who was tortured and murdered in Cairo in 2016, Egypt's public prosecutor's office said on Wednesday.

Giulio Regeni, a 28-year-old postgraduate student at Cambridge University, vanished in Cairo in January 2016. His body was found almost a week later and a post mortem examination showed he had been tortured before his death.

Intelligence and security sources told Reuters in 2016 that police had arrested Regeni outside a Cairo metro station and then transferred him to a compound run by Homeland Security. The police have denied this.

Egyptian public prosecutor Hamada El-Sawy told a visiting group of Italian investigators that "a new investigation team was formed and is working on studying the case," the statement said.

The team "is working on taking all the necessary investigation procedures to clarify the truth in a completely neutral and independent way," it added. The prosecutor did not say why the new committee had been formed. Italian investigators have repeatedly complained about a lack of cooperation from their Egyptian counterparts.

Egyptian investigators "heard the views" of their Italian counterparts in joint meetings over Tuesday and Wednesday, the prosecutor's office said.

The committee was formed after Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte visited Cairo on Tuesday, meeting President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi.

Egyptian officials have repeatedly denied any involvement in Regeni's killing.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Egypt](#)

[Giulio Regeni](#)

[Cambridge student Giulio Regeni](#)

Egypt refuses to accuse police over Italian student's murder  
Hijacker claims Egypt 'must have murdered' Italian student