

# [Pompeo: Iran the common villain in Mideast](#)

Author:

Tue, 2019-12-03 00:00

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Monday that Iran was the uniting factor behind protests around the Middle East, saying demonstrators in Iraq, Lebanon and Iran itself opposed the clerical regime.

While acknowledging diverse local reasons for the unrest that has swept the Middle East as well as other regions, Pompeo pointed the finger at Iran.

Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi resigned “because the people were demanding freedom and the security forces had killed dozens and dozens of people. That’s due in large part to Iranian influence,” Pompeo said.

“The same is true in Lebanon, the protests in Beirut,” he said at the University of Louisville.

“They want Hezbollah and Iran out of their country, out of their system as a violent and a repressive force,” he said.

He said that protests inside Iran – which Amnesty International says have killed more than 200 people – showed that Iranians were also “fed up.” “They see a theocracy that is stealing money, the ayatollahs stealing tens and tens of millions of dollars,” he said.

In both Iraq and Lebanon, protesters have primarily called for an end to corruption, greater efforts to create jobs and a restructuring of the political system.

In Iraq, Abdel Mahdi had close ties with fellow Shiite-majority Iran but also enjoyed support from the US. Protesters last week torched the Iranian consulate in Najaf.

In Lebanon, the US has been seeking to isolate Hezbollah, the pro-Iranian militant movement that is also a political party with berths in the previous government.

President Donald Trump’s administration has put a priority on curbing Tehran’s regional influence including by imposing sweeping sanctions.



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[Mike Pompeo](#)

[Iran](#)

Pompeo: We will sanction Iranian officials over protests crackdown

urges Iranians to share videos showing 'regime's crackdown' on protesters

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## [Top rebel leader says more time needed for Sudan peace deal](#)

Author:

Mon, 2019-12-02 22:20

KHARTOUM: A senior Sudanese rebel leader Monday called for a three-month extension to finalize a peace deal with the Khartoum government, as talks between the two sides are to resume next week.

Yasir Arman, deputy leader of the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), also called on Washington to remove Sudan from its blacklist of "state sponsors of terrorism."

Peace talks opened in October in Juba between Khartoum's new transitional government and rebels who fought now-ousted president Omar Al-Bashir's forces in Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan.

A second round of talks is set to begin next Tuesday in the South Sudanese capital, and a peace deal had been expected to be struck a few days later on December 14.

But Arman, who is a senior leader in the Sudan Revolutionary Front rebel alliance, said more time was needed.

"We call for an extension of the Juba Declaration by three months until March 8," he told reporters in Khartoum on Monday.

"We hope that the December 10 round will be the last and peace will be achieved," he added, without giving a specific reason for the extra time needed to reach that goal.

Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed and millions displaced in fighting between rebel groups and Sudanese security forces in the three conflict zones during Bashir's rule.

The transitional authorities, tasked with leading the way to civilian rule after Bashir's ouster in April, have made ending wars in these regions their top priority.

"We support peace ... We are looking for a national project and a strategic exit for armed rebel movements," Arman said.

He also urged Washington to drop Sudan from its blacklist.

"After the fall of the National Congress Party, Sudan is no longer a state that sponsors terrorism," Arman said, referring to Bashir's party.

Washington had added Sudan to its blacklist in 1993 for Khartoum's alleged support to Islamist militant groups.

Al-Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden lived in Sudan between 1992 to 1996.



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Hundreds march in Sudan capital seeking justice for those killed  
Sudan disbands Bashir's NCP party, overturns moral policing law

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## [UK's Prince William kicks off solo Middle East tour in Kuwait](#)

Author:

Mon, 2019-12-02 18:56

KUWAIT CITY: The UK's Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, met with the Emir of Kuwait on Monday during his solo Middle East tour.

The Duke of Cambridge was received by Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at the Bayan Palace, where the two enjoyed a five-course lunch.

During their meeting, which was attended by dignitaries, government ministers, ambassadors and religious leaders from the Muslim and Christian faiths, the Emir expressed his sympathies for the recent London Bridge Attack in which two people were killed.

He had sent a cable of condolence to Queen Elizabeth II and UK prime minister

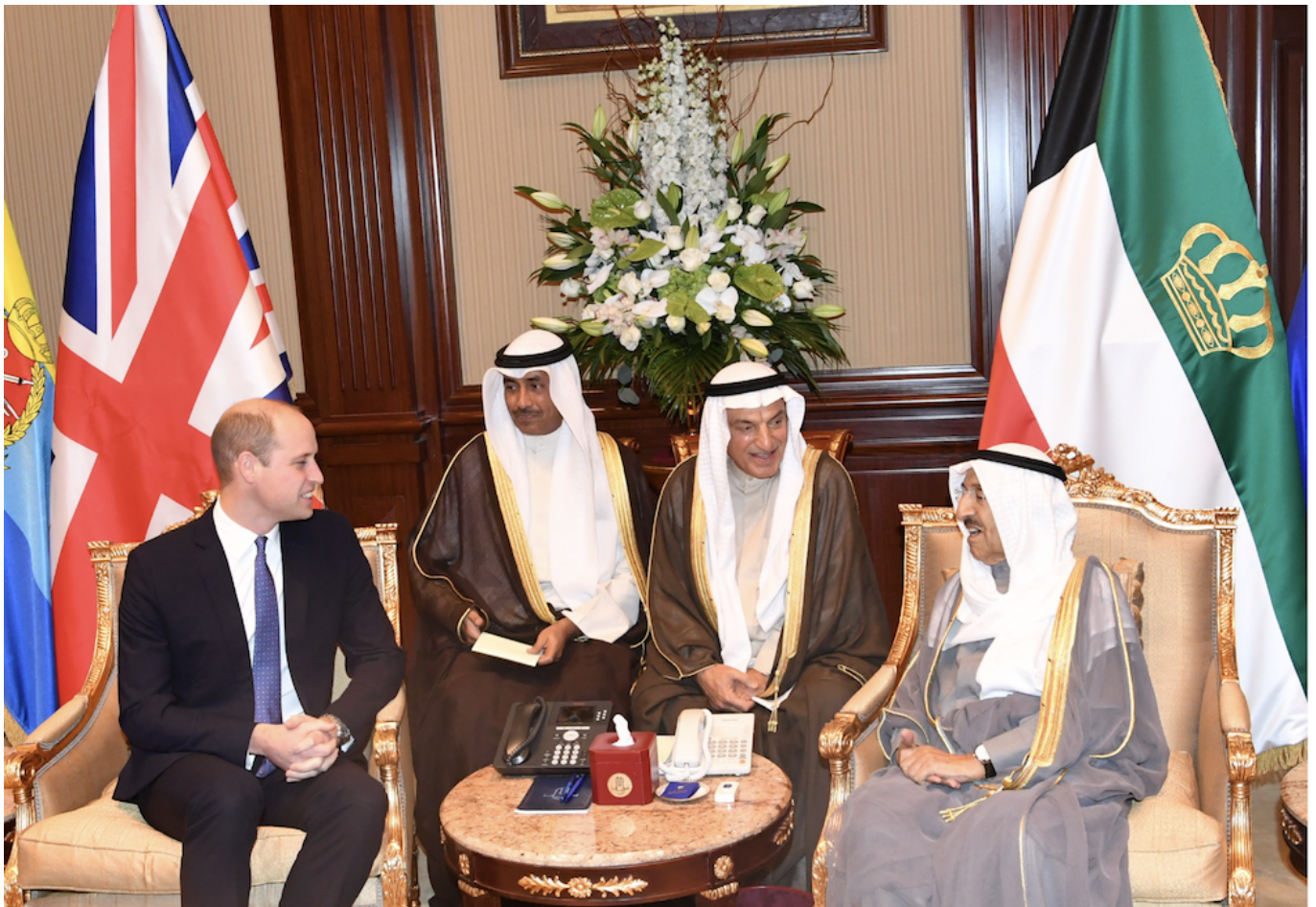
Boris Johnson on Saturday.

Also on Monday, Prince William visited the Jahra Nature Reserve where he was briefed on Kuwait's efforts to preserve its natural habitats.

The Duke will also visit Oman on his journey to the region, which Kensington Palace said was a mission of strengthening British-Gulf cooperation.

"Throughout the tour, the Duke's programme will pay tribute to the historic ties Britain shares with Kuwait and Oman, and will highlight strong links and cooperation in many areas, including education, the environment, and defence," a statement read.

"From the modern capitals of Kuwait City and Muscat, to the vast Kuwaiti deserts and stunning wadis in the Omani mountains, the visit will take in both countries' unique cultures, their beautiful landscapes, and diverse communities," it added.









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Prince William and wife Kate leave Pakistan, day after aborted flight

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## [Amnesty puts Iran death toll above 200 as US says Tehran target of regional anger](#)

Author:

AFP

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1575301301861144600

Mon, 2019-12-02 15:40

LONDON: At least 208 people are believed to have been killed during a crackdown on protests in Iran last month, Amnesty International said Monday.

The steep increase in the number of dead came as the US said the clerical regime in Tehran was the uniting factor behind protests in Iraq, Lebanon and Iran itself.

"The number of people believed to have been killed during demonstrations in Iran that broke out on 15 November has risen to at least 208, based on credible reports received by the organization," Amnesty said, adding that the actual death toll was likely to be higher.

The new toll ups the number of deaths according to Amnesty by almost 50, with the organisation saying dozens were recorded in Shahriar city in Tehran province, "one of the cities with the highest death tolls."

Protests erupted on Nov. 15 after the shock announcement of a fuel price hike of up to 200 percent but were quickly quashed by authorities who also imposed a week-long near-total internet blackout.

Philip Luther, Amnesty's research and advocacy head for the Middle East, called the number of deaths "evidence that Iran's security forces went on a horrific killing spree," and called on the international community to ensure those responsible are held accountable.

"The deaths have resulted almost entirely from the use of firearms," Amnesty said previously.

Amnesty added that, according to collected information, "families of victims have been threatened and warned not to speak to the media, or to hold funeral ceremonies for their loved ones.

"Some families are also being forced to make extortionate payments to have the bodies of their loved ones returned to them."

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Monday that the protests in Iran and demonstrations in Iraq and Lebanon, where Tehran has significant influence, showed people across the region were fed up with the mullahs.

While acknowledging diverse local reasons for the unrest that has swept the Middle East as well as other regions, Pompeo pointed the finger at Iran.

Iraqi premier Adel Abdel Mahdi resigned "because the people were demanding freedom and the security forces had killed dozens and dozens of people. That's due in large part to Iranian influence," Pompeo said.

"The same is true in Lebanon, the protests in Beirut" he said at the University of Louisville.

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[Iran protests](#)

Iran disputes ‘exaggerated’ protest death tollsIran protests ‘won’t end until regime falls’

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## [Eight children among 9 killed in Turkish shelling on north Syria](#)

Author:

AFP

ID:

1575298554230915100

Mon, 2019-12-02 14:46

BEIRUT: Eight children were among nine people killed Monday in a Turkish artillery attack that hit near a school in a northern Syrian town, a Britain-based war monitor said.

Those killed in the attack on Kurdish-held Tal Rifaat were all displaced from the Afrin region which was captured last year by Turkish troops and their Syrian proxies, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.



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Turkey 'may stall NATO defense plan over Syria dispute' France warns Turkey over Syria military action ahead of talks with European leaders