

# [Iraqi blogger outspoken about country's corruption detained](#)

Author:

By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA | AP

ID:

1571328108018145500

Thu, 2019-10-17 14:18

BAGHDAD: A family member of a popular Iraqi blogger says authorities have detained him, apparently over his coverage of anti-government protests. The family member, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals, said heavily armed masked gunmen stormed the apartment of Shujaa Al-Khafaji in Baghdad at dawn Thursday and took him away. Al-Khafaji, 29, runs a popular Facebook page called "Brothers Iraq" that focuses on human rights violations. On Tuesday the Facebook page, which has 2.1 million likes, posted a video that showed what it said were people setting a checkpoint on fire after the protesters had left. It blamed government supporters for the fire. The relative said Al-Khafaji received threats from unknown people in recent days warning him not to publish posts about the protests.



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[blogger](#)  
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[detention](#)

Iran-backed militias deployed snipers during Iraq protestsIran-backed  
militias deployed snipers during Iraq protests

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## **Afghanistan suffers record 4,300 civilian casualties in three months – UN**

Author:

Reuters

ID:

1571323862577671300

Thu, 2019-10-17 14:39

KABUL: A record 4,313 civilians were injured or killed in Afghanistan's war against the Islamist Taliban between July and September, the United Nations said on Thursday.

The tally was up 42 percent from the same period last year – in a war that ebbs and flows with the seasonal weather – and included more than a thousand deaths, according to data from the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

That made it the bloodiest period in the world's longest-running war since UNAMA began collecting like-for-like figures in 2009. It brought the total of casualties for the first nine months of 2019 to over 8,000.

"Civilian casualties at record-high levels clearly show the need for all parties concerned to pay much more attention to protecting the civilian population, including through a review of conduct during combat operations," said Tadamichi Yamamoto, one of the UN's top officials in Afghanistan. Taliban insurgents fighting the US-backed Kabul government control more of Afghanistan than at any time since being ousted from power nearly two decades ago.

They have stepped up a campaign of suicide bombings in recent years as Washington tries to pull its forces out.

Around 62 percent of casualties were caused by what UNAMA called "anti-government elements," though casualties caused by pro-government forces also rose 26 percent.

UNAMA said on Tuesday that 85 civilians had been killed and more than 370 wounded in violence linked to last month's election.

The two presidential front-runners have both already claimed victory despite the count being delayed.



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Afghan polls: US diplomat stresses need for transparency  
Afghan official says car bomb wounds dozens of children in east

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## [‘Don’t be a fool’ Trump tells Erdogan in letter: World reacts](#)

Thu, 2019-10-17 17:49

LONDON: As a communication between two powerful heads of state, it didn’t exactly follow the usual protocol.

“Don’t be a fool” Donald Trump told Recep Tayyip Erdogan as he ended the three paragraph letter, which mixed threats to destroy the Turkish economy with lines out of a Hollywood action movie.

The extraordinary content of the note has sparked widespread reaction both at home and abroad as the US president faces a furore over his decision to

withdraw troops from north-eastern Syria.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 9, 2019

His Excellency  
Recep Tayyip Erdogan  
President of the Republic of Turkey  
Ankara

Dear Mr. President:

Let's work out a good deal! You don't want to be responsible for slaughtering thousands of people, and I don't want to be responsible for destroying the Turkish economy—and I will. I've already given you a little sample with respect to Pastor Brunson.

I have worked hard to solve some of your problems. Don't let the world down. You can make a great deal. General Mazloun is willing to negotiate with you, and he is willing to make concessions that they would never have made in the past. I am confidentially enclosing a copy of his letter to me, just received.

History will look upon you favorably if you get this done the right and humane way. It will look upon you forever as the devil if good things don't happen. Don't be a tough guy. Don't be a fool!

I will call you later.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald Trump", written in a cursive, stylized script.

The text of the letter was revealed on Wednesday evening as Trump was accused of giving Turkey the green light to launch an operation against Kurdish forces.



The letter was sent on Oct. 9 the day the incursion began.

"You don't want to be responsible for slaughtering thousands of people, and I don't want to be responsible for destroying the Turkish economy – and I will," he wrote.

"History will look upon you favorably if you get this done the right and humane way," Trump continued. "It will look upon you forever as the devil if good things don't happen."

"Don't be a tough guy. Don't be a fool!"

In Ankara, Erdogan "thoroughly rejected" the letter and "put it in the bin" Turkish presidential sources told BBC Turkish. Despite his anger at the tone, Erdogan went ahead with a meeting on Thursday with US Vice President Mike Pence.

This is insane. [pic.twitter.com/ERHXo0GqUS](https://pic.twitter.com/ERHXo0GqUS)

– Justin Amash (@justinamash) [October 16, 2019](#)

The Kremlin, which has troops alongside Syrian forces filling into some of the territory vacated by the US, questioned the tone of the letter.

"You don't often encounter such language in correspondence between heads of state. It's a highly unusual letter," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

At home the letter was seized upon by Trump's rivals, and even mocked including within his own party. The letter emerged on Wednesday after Republicans joined Democrats in voting 354 to 60 in the House to condemn the decision to withdraw US forces.

"I actually thought it was a prank, a joke, that it couldn't possibly come from the Oval Office," the Democratic congressman Mike Quigley told CNN. "It sounds all the world like the president of the United States, in some sort of momentary lapse, just dictated angrily whatever was on the top of his head."

Nervous Nancy's unhinged meltdown! [pic.twitter.com/RDeUI7sfe7](https://pic.twitter.com/RDeUI7sfe7)

– Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) [October 16, 2019](#)

However, Republican senator Lindsey Graham, who has criticized Trump for the withdrawal, said it was a "good letter" and had urged him to release it.

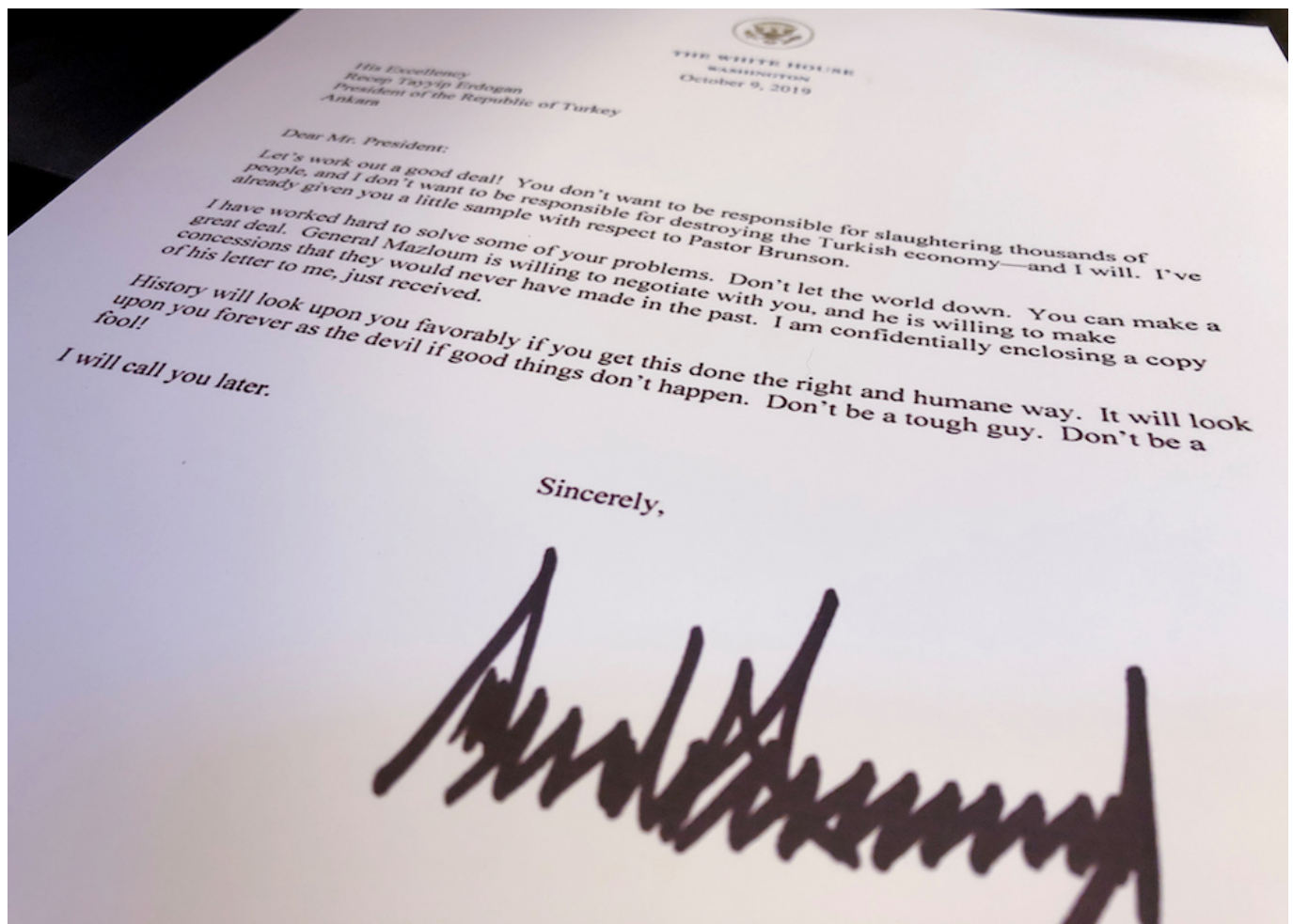
After the House vote, congressional leaders of both parties went to the White

House for a briefing, which grew contentious, with Trump and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi trading jabs. The Democrats said they walked out when the meeting descended into trading insults.

"What we witnessed on the part of the president was a meltdown," Pelosi, D-Calif., told reporters, saying Trump appeared visibly "shaken up" over the House vote.

Stephanie Grisham, the White House press secretary, said that Mr Trump remained "measured and decisive" throughout the meeting. She tweeted: "Dem 'leadership' chose to storm out & whine to cameras."

\*With AP



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[Erdogan](#)

[Syria](#)

[Turkey](#)

Trump Twitter photo attack backfires as Pelosi owns itUS lawmakers set measure opposing Trump on Syria troop withdrawal

# Buses collide in central Sudan, killing 21

Author:

Associated Press

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1571258763271242000

Wed, 2019-10-16 19:19

CAIRO: Sudan's state-run news agency says a head-on collision between two buses has killed 21 people in a central province.

SUNA reports the crash took place on Wednesday in a small town south of Obeid, the capital of North Kordofan Province. It said 29 others were injured.

Local media say one bus was heading to Kaduqli, the capital of South Kordofan Province, and the other was traveling to Obeid.

Road accidents are common in Sudan, often the result of badly maintained roads and poor enforcement of traffic laws. The World Health Organization said road accidents killed more than 10,000 people in Sudan in 2018.

Last month, a similar crash between two buses killed 15 people and left 22 others injured on a highway south of the capital, Khartoum.



Main category:

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[Sudan](#)

[bus](#)

South Sudan says will host peace talks between Sudan and rebels

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## How Saudi Arabia is leading Middle East's fight against breast cancer

Wed, 2019-10-16 22:16

ABU DHABI: Breast cancer remains the most common form of the disease among women despite major advances in treatment coupled with improved screening and awareness campaigns.

Rates of the disease are increasing in nearly every region globally as aging populations and factors such as obesity take their toll.

In 2018, more than 2 million new cases were reported worldwide of what is one of the biggest and most preventable killers of women.

Dr. Samer Abushullaih, an oncologist and physician manager at Johns Hopkins Aramco Healthcare in Dhahran, said that despite rising detection rates and the introduction of cutting-edge technology, health experts cannot afford to be complacent.

"In the past 20 years we have seen major advances in the survival of breast cancer patients around the world," he told Arab News.

"It has been an amazing journey of heightened awareness, technological advances and changes in culture. Unfortunately, we are a long way away from defeating the disease."

The Middle East is forecast to experience the fastest increase in cancer rates globally over the next two decades. By 2030, prevalence of breast cancer is expected to be double what it was in 2012, according to experts at the War on Cancer Middle East.

Regionally, Lebanon has the highest incidence among Arab countries, followed by Bahrain and Morocco. In the UAE, cancer is the third-biggest cause of death, with breast cancer being the most prevalent type.

As the world marks Breast Cancer Awareness Month, experts say that Saudi Arabia is leading the fight against the disease regionally. Even so, cancer incidence rose in the Kingdom by 49 percent between 2008 and 2017, and breast cancer remains the most common form of the illness among women.



## FASTFACTS

2.1 MILLION – women diagnosed with breast cancer worldwide each year.

627,000 – An estimated 627,000 women died of breast cancer in 2018. (WHO)

50 – Women over 50 years old affected most, but younger women also at risk.

Abushullaih said that the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia has the largest number of breast cancer patients in the country .

“The use of 3D mammography and advanced MRI images have improved early detection,” he said, adding that treatment of breast cancer has evolved significantly in the past few years.

“Surgery moved from the traditional mastectomy and lymph node dissection to more cosmetically friendly procedures such as lumpectomies and sentinel lymph node biopsy,” he said.

“Also, the new techniques of oncoplastic surgeries, such as skin sparing and nipple sparing mastectomies, spare a lot of women the physical and emotional agony of losing their breasts.”

According to Abushullaih, advancements in molecular profiling have improved the understanding of breast cancer. Physicians can tell who needs chemotherapy, sparing those who do not the dreaded side effects.

Drug development has also evolved in the field of targeted therapy. Medicines such Herceptin, suitable for women with a particularly fast-growing form of the disease, cut the risk of cancer returning by up to half. Tamoxifen, designed as a contraceptive, is now used to prevent breast cancer in women at high risk.

“These are drugs that target the cancer cells and spare the normal cells,” said Abushullaih.

He said that new medicines, targeted therapies such as radiotherapy, and advances in surgery, along with screening, have expanded the resources available to beat breast cancer.

“On the horizon, research and advances in immunotherapy, where the body’s immune system works with medication to fight the disease, are promising to advance survival and cure rates,” said Abushullaih.

When it comes to Saudi Arabia, Abushullaih said: “The Kingdom is in the lead in the fight against cancer and other diseases, both in the GCC and the Middle East.”



Early detection rates for breast cancer are relatively low in the Gulf.  
(Shutterstock)

However, he said that heightened awareness will help in early detection of the disease, ensuring that women carry out regular self-examination and get screened early.

"I think our early detection rate is still very low compared with the West. More than 50 percent of all breast cancer cases in the Kingdom are still detected after it has spread to lymph nodes or other parts of the body," said Abushullaih.

One of the biggest obstacles facing women is being proactive in requesting a mammography, even when it is not offered, he said.

"Treating breast cancer at an early stage is much easier. Saudi Arabia and many of the countries in the Middle East fare the same way with regard to screening. However, in the Kingdom it is slowly improving."

Another obstacle in patient care is the cost of therapy, said Abushullaih. "Here, the Kingdom fares better than most, if not all, the countries in the region as the government invested heavily early on in providing for cancer patients," he said.

Dr. Nazura Siddiqi, a specialist in obstetrics and gynecology at the UAE's Bareen International Hospital, said the first step to a diagnosis is self-examination.

"Women should check for lumps and change in size or other signs linked to

breast cancer," she said.

"The other forms include visiting a health care facility and getting clinical breast examination by a physician, ultrasound, MRI or mammogram."

Siddiqi quoted research by the American Cancer Society that showed almost one in eight women suffers from breast cancer.

"In fact, according to the World Cancer Research Fund International's statistics, 12 percent of all new cancer cases and 25 percent of all cancers in women could be linked to breast cancer," she said.

The risk doubles for women who have one first-degree female relative (sister, mother, daughter) diagnosed with breast cancer. If two first-degree relatives have been diagnosed, the risk is five times higher than average.

"There is also a group of women who don't have family history, yet can develop breast cancer," Siddiqi said. "Therefore, it is highly recommended to undergo regular screening in order to detect the condition in its early stages."

Hormonal factors such as early menarche, late menopause or late childbirth are also potential risk factors, said Siddiqi.

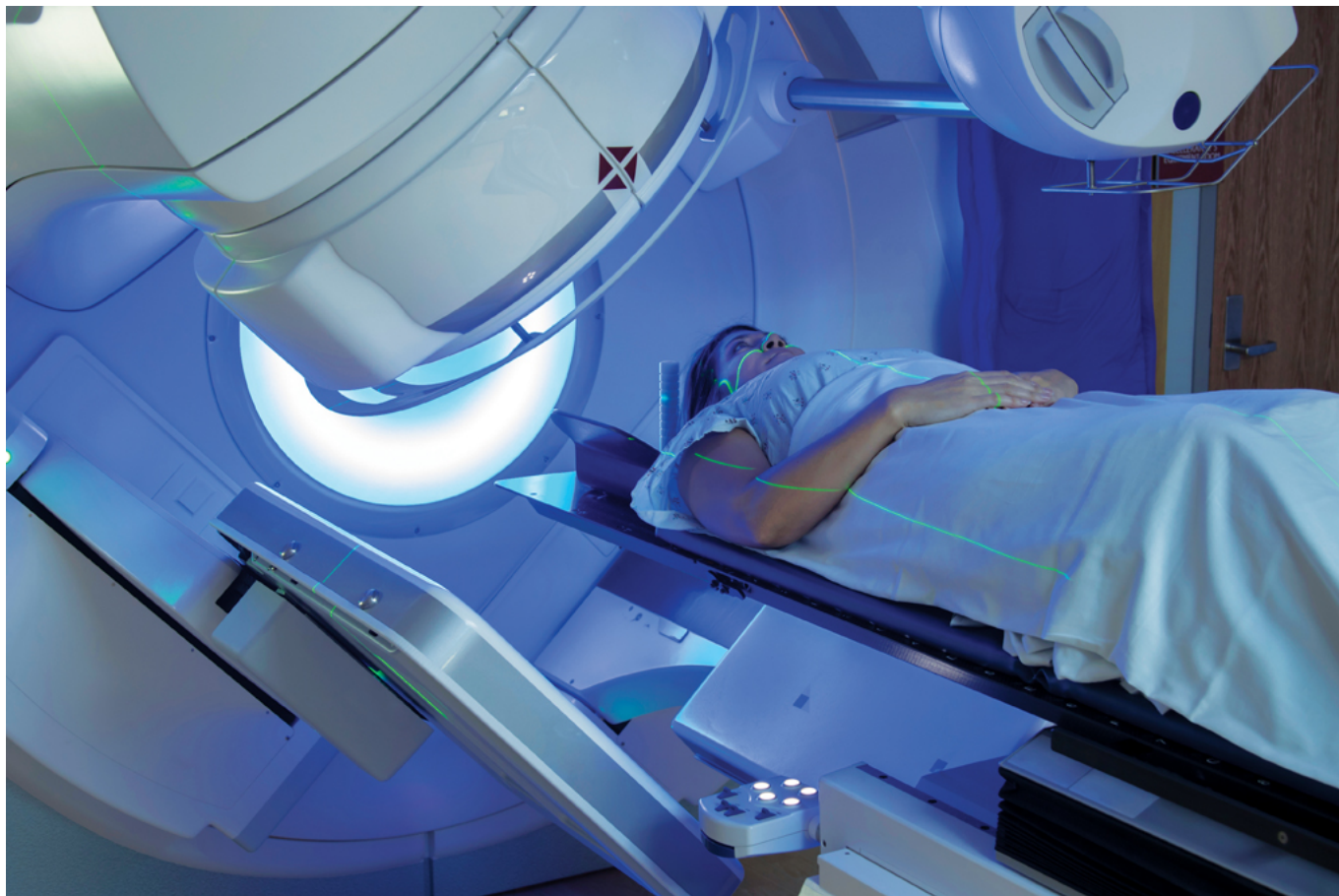
Use of oral contraceptives and hormone replacement therapy are also believed to raise breast cancer risks.

Lifestyle is another issue, said Siddiqi. "Research shows that factors that contribute to breast cancer and resulting mortality include alcohol use, obesity and physical inactivity," she said.

According to the Saudi Cancer Registry of the King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Center, breast cancer has a prevalence rate of 21.8 percent in the Kingdom.

Earlier this year, Tareef Yousef Alaama, of the Saudi Ministry of Health, told Arab News that a string of cancer-prevention measures were planned in the Kingdom.

These included the roll-out of advanced screening programs, increased palliative care and greater public awareness about risk factors associated with the illness.



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[Breast Cancer Awareness Month](#)

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[King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Center](#)

Fitness trio teams up to fight cancer in Saudi ArabiaKAUST and KAU join forces for research in cancer