

Sudan says 87 killed when security forces broke up protest in June

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KHARTOUM, July 27 (Reuters) – The head of a Sudanese investigative committee said on Saturday that 87 people were killed and 168 wounded on June 3 when a sit-in protest was violently broken up by security forces.

Fath al-Rahman Saeed, the head of the committee, told a news conference that 17 of those killed were in the square occupied by protesters and 48 of the wounded were hit by bullets.

Some security forces fired at protesters and three officers violated orders by moving forces into the sit-in, he said, adding that an order was also issued to whip protesters.

Opposition medics have said 127 people were killed and 400 wounded in the dispersal, while the Health Ministry had put the death toll at 61. The sit-in outside the Defence Ministry in the capital Khartoum was a focal point for protests that led to the ouster of long-time President Omar al-Badri on April 11.

“Some outlaws exploited this gathering and formed another gathering in what is known as the Columbia area, where negative and illegal practices took place,” Saeed said.

“It became a security threat, forcing the authorities to make necessary arrangements to clear the area,” he said.



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Sudan protest leaders, rebels end rift over power deal

[Air strikes kill 15 civilians in northwest Syria](#)

Author:

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Sat, 2019-07-27 14:32

BEIRUT: Regime and Russian air strikes Saturday killed 15 civilians, more than half of them children, in northwestern Syria where ramped up attacks by the two allies have claimed hundreds of lives since April.

Idlib and parts of the neighbouring provinces of Aleppo, Hama and Latakia are under the control of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, a jihadist group led by Syria's former Al-Qaeda affiliate.

The region is supposed to be protected from a massive government offensive by

a September buffer zone deal, but it has come under increasing bombardment by the regime and its Russian ally over the past three months.

In the Idlib town of Ariha, seven children were among 11 civilians killed in Syrian air strikes that targeted two residential buildings and also wounded 28 other people, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

One of the dead was a small boy who was found under the rubble by White Helmets rescuers, his face bloodied and his body covered in white dust, a photographer who works with AFP said from the scene.

He also witnessed rescuers digging through the rubble of a collapsed roof for more victims, while a member of the White Helmets moved the body of a young man into the back of a pickup truck.

Ariha made headlines after it was pummelled Wednesday by warplanes that claimed the lives of 10 civilians, according to the Observatory, when a picture of three sisters struggling for their lives went viral on social media networks.

The picture showed two dust-covered girls trapped in the rubble and clutching their baby sister by her shirt as she dangles from a bombed out building.

One of the girls later died of her wounds while the other two are hospitalised and fighting to stay alive, according to local medics.

Russian air strikes on northern Hama province Saturday that hit an ambulance killed three rescuers while another child died in Syrian regime bombardment elsewhere in the Idlib region, the Observatory said.

Save the Children said on Thursday that the number of children killed in Idlib over the past four weeks had exceeded the number slain in the same region in the whole of last year.

Air strikes by the Syrian regime and its ally Russia on the Idlib region have claimed more than 740 lives since late April, according to the war monitor. The UN says more than 400,000 people have been displaced.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has documented 39 attacks against health facilities or medical workers in the area in three months.

At least 50 schools have been damaged by air strikes and shelling over the same period, it said.

UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet on Friday condemned "international indifference" in the face of the mounting death toll in Idlib.

"These are civilian objects, and it seems highly unlikely, given the persistent pattern of such attacks, that they are all being hit by accident," Bachelet said.

"Intentional attacks against civilians are war crimes, and those who have ordered them or carried them out are criminally responsible for their actions," she said.

The region under attack is home to some three million people, nearly half of them already displaced from other parts of the country.

The war in Syria has killed more than 370,000 people and displaced millions since it started in 2011 with a brutal crackdown on anti-government protests.



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Syrian refugees in Turkey 'detained' and 'forced' to return to conflict zones

[Much of southern Yemen flooded by heavy rainfall; 6 dead](#)

Author:

AP

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1564224565113912000

Sat, 2019-07-27 10:15

SANAA: Yemeni officials say at least six people were killed when floods swept through much of the country's south following heavy rainfall.

The officials said Saturday that at least three people are still missing in the Abyan and Shabwa provinces hit by heavy rains over the past 24 hours.

The officials say rushing muddy water flooded dozens of farms, cutting off roads and sweeping away cars and cattle in parts of both provinces.

They added that power outages have also engulfed entire areas in Abyan and Shabwa. They officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak to the media.

Yemen is located at the southern corner of the Arabian Peninsula, overlooking the Red and the Arabian Sea. Its rainy season is in the spring and summer.



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UN says war in Yemen is 'eminently resolvable' UN envoy for Yemen 'very concerned' about Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia

[Syrian refugees in Turkey 'detained'](#)

and 'forced' to return to conflict zones

Sat, 2019-07-27 13:47

DUBAI: Syrians are being "detained" and "coerced" to go back to their war-torn country by Turkish authorities, according to a report published by Human Rights Watch on Saturday.

"Turkey claims it helps Syrians voluntarily return to their country, but threatening to lock them up until they agree to return, forcing them to sign forms, and dumping them in a war zone is neither voluntary nor legal," Gerry Simpson, associate Emergencies director at Human Rights Watch, said.

According to the report, Syrians are being coerced into signing forms saying they want to return to Syria, and then detained before they are sent back to conflict zones including Idlib and Aleppo, where more than 400,000 people already died in the armed conflict.

Although the Turkish Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu denied such claims, several Syrians testified to have experienced maltreatment from Turkish authorities, drawing criticisms from rights groups.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees called on states not to "forcibly return Syrian nationals and former habitual residents of Syria," and argues that asylum seekers "need international refugee protection."

Over 3.6 million Syrian refugees are in Turkey – half a million of them in Istanbul. Recently, Turkey has intensified its crackdown on "unregistered" refugees, increasing police spot-checks of Syrians' registration documents.

"Turkey should protect the basic rights of all Syrians, regardless of registration status, and register those denied registration since late 2017," HRW's report said, citing an international law that prohibits the return of anyone to "a place where they would face a real risk of persecution, torture, or other ill-treatment, or a threat to life."



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Damascus rejects Turkey-US talks on Syria buffer zone

[Drone seized in Pakistan suspected to be Iranian](#)

Author:

Fri, 2019-07-26 22:49

KARACHI: A Pakistani official confirmed on Friday that a foreign drone was seized from the country's Chaghi district bordering Iran and Afghanistan, fuelling speculation among analysts that it likely belongs to Tehran.

"A drone was found ... in the Tuzgi Wadh area of the Chaghi district," said the region's deputy commissioner, Fateh Khan Khajjak.

A Balochistan government official said on Tuesday that the area where the

drone was found was just a few miles away from the Reko Diq gold and copper mine.

He rejected reports that the drone had landed due to technical issues, adding that it had been handed over to the Frontier Corps.

"The drone grounded with the help of a parachute and was in a functional condition. Had the troops not switched it off on time, it would've flown away," the official told Arab News on condition of anonymity. He further divulged that the area where the drone was found was a 30-minute drive from Helmand province, Afghanistan.

Chaghi is known for Chaghi-I, five simultaneous underground nuclear tests conducted by Pakistan on May 28, 1998.

Asked who the drone belonged to, the official said: "It's hard to say as the drone has no monogram or country flag." He added that an investigation had been launched to identify the country of origin.

Meanwhile, analysts claimed it was likely Iranian.

"It appears to be an Iranian Mohajer drone, although the tail slightly differs from images released by the press in Tehran," said Erik Lin-Greenberg, a drone expert and assistant professor at the American University's School of International Service in Washington, DC.

He said it was difficult to determine why the drone had landed in Pakistan, adding: "States typically want to keep their military technology from falling into the hands of rivals who could reverse engineer systems and glean valuable technical and operational information. The drone may have malfunctioned and made an unanticipated landing."

Greenberg added that it was difficult to assess what Tehran's intentions were in this case, or even if the drone was intended to be operated inside Pakistan. "The Iranian drone that Pakistan shot down in 2017 was reported to be monitoring the border region for illegal activity," he said.

Khalid Muhammad, an Islamabad-based security analyst, said: "It's the second intrusion of an Iranian drone into Pakistan's airspace, and this has happened within a span of a week or 10 days."

"Whether we wait for confirmation or not, this will emerge as an Iranian drone," he added.

"This is the first time a drone has been recovered in functional condition. The last Iranian drone was shot down in Balochistan," he said, adding: "We must believe that Iran is monitoring something within Pakistan. We haven't had this frequency of drones coming across our border in the past, so we must believe that they're conducting surveillance."

This is not the first time Tehran has sent drones into Pakistan's airspace in Balochistan, Greenberg said.

“In 2017, for instance, Pakistan reportedly shot down an Iranian drone in the region. That particular incident didn’t escalate to conflict, and this incident also seems unlikely to escalate. My research suggests that attacks on drones fall at a less escalatory threshold than attacks on inhabited assets, making it easier for countries – in this case, Iran – to avoid retaliating when their drones are shot down. In other words, losing a machine is far different than losing a friendly pilot,” he said.

Greenberg added that drones offer a means of carrying out military operations with a reduced risk of losing pilots, lower operating costs than manned aircraft and longer surveillance capabilities.

“As a result, drones are ideally suited for dull, dangerous, and dirty missions that states might not otherwise launch using manned platforms. This is why we’re seeing a significant uptick in their use in conflict zones and contested areas around the world,” he said.

He also added that Iran’s military had long operated drones, and media reports suggest it has been expanding its fleet in recent years. “Iran not only operates its own indigenously produced drones, but has also exported them to other state and non-state actors,” said Greenberg.



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