

[Egypt referendum extending El-Sisi rule to 2030 passes with 88 percent of vote](#)

Tue, 2019-04-23 20:58

CAIRO: Egypt's election commission says voters have approved constitutional amendments allowing President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi to remain in power until 2030.

Lasheen Ibrahim, the head of the commission, said on Tuesday the amendments were approved with 88.83% voting in favor. The turnout was 44.33% of eligible voters. The nationwide referendum took place over three days, from Saturday through to Monday to maximize turnout.

Pro-government media, business people and lawmakers had pushed for a "Yes" vote and a high turnout by offering incentives.

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Egypt's El-Sisi calls on international community to 'shoulder responsibilities' in Libya
Final day of Egyptian referendum to extend El-Sisi's rule

Israel to name Golan settlement after Trump

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Tue, 2019-04-23 15:42

JERUSALEM: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Tuesday he plans to name a new settlement in the occupied Golan after US President Donald Trump in appreciation of his recognition of Israel's claim of sovereignty there. Netanyahu, who has been on a trip to the region with his family for the week-long Passover holiday, said in a video message that he would present a resolution to the government calling for a new settlement named after the US president.

"All Israelis were deeply moved when President Trump made his historic decision to recognize Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights," he said. Trump again broke with longstanding international consensus on March 25 when he recognized Israel's claim of sovereignty over the part of the strategic plateau it seized from Syria in the 1967 Six-Day War.

The decision came only two weeks ahead of a tightly contested Israeli election, which saw Netanyahu win a fifth term in office.

Trump has shifted US policy sharply in Israel's favor since taking office, most notably by recognizing the disputed city of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

Israel annexed 1,200 square kilometers (460 square miles) of the Golan it seized in 1981, a move never recognized by the international community.

Around 18,000 Syrians from the Druze sect – most of whom refuse to take Israeli citizenship – remain in the occupied Golan.

Some 20,000 Israeli settlers have moved there, spread over 33 settlements.



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Trump's Golan Heights move causes concern in Lebanon for land owners
US criticized for recognizing Israeli sovereignty over Golan

[Egypt's El-Sisi calls on international community to 'shoulder responsibilities' in Libya](#)

Tue, 2019-04-23 19:52

CAIRO: Egypt's president Abdel Fattah El-Sisi called on Tuesday for the international community to "shoulder its responsibilities" to ensure the start of political negotiations between parties in Libya.

Speaking at the African Union Summit, he asked countries of the bloc to offer their support to Libya to help eliminate terrorism in the country.

El-Sisi said: "You must enable the army and police in Libya to perform their duty to maintain security and stability."

Egypt was hosting African leaders for emergency talks on Tuesday on the upheavals in Sudan and Libya, as El-Sisi warned against "a slide into chaos."

El-Sisi called for a coherent regional response to Sudan, as protesters in Khartoum keep up demands for a civilian government and Libyan military strongman Khalifa Haftar's forces bear down on Tripoli.

The leaders in Cairo urged Sudan's military rulers, who took power after toppling longtime president Omar Al-Bashir, to implement "peaceful, organised and democratic transition measures" within three months, the Egyptian presidency said.

But they also agreed on "the need for more time" for a transition, urging the African Union to extend its end of April deadline for the ruling military council to hand power to civilians or face suspension from the bloc.



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Egypt to host African summits Tuesday on Sudan, Libya
Libyan force slows Tripoli push over concerns for civilians

Jared Kushner: US to present Middle East peace plan after Ramadan

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Tue, 2019-04-23 15:28

NEW YORK: President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner said Tuesday that he would present his long-awaited Middle East peace plan after the Islamic fasting month of Ramadan ends in early June.

Kushner, speaking at a forum of Time magazine, said he had hoped to offer the proposal late last year but that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu then called elections and still needs time to form a coalition.

"Once that's done we'll probably be in the middle of Ramadan, so we'll wait until after Ramadan and then we'll put our plan out," said Kushner, a senior adviser to Trump.

Kushner, who is President Donald Trump's son-in-law, would not discuss any details of the plan, including whether it would endorse a two-state solution for Israel and the Palestinians.

The peace proposal has been in the works for two years and the process has been greeted with skepticism both on Capitol Hill and in global capitals.

(With Agencies)



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Pompeo says Israeli-Palestinian peace plan to be presented 'before too long'

US calls on Iran to keep energy flow through Strait of Hormuz

Tue, 2019-04-23 18:12

WASHINGTON: The US State Department has called on Iran to keep the straits of Hormuz and Bab Al-Mandeb open, an official said on Tuesday after the US a day earlier demanded that Iran oil buyers halt their purchases by May 1.

“We call on Iran, and all countries, to respect the free flow of energy and commerce, and freedom of navigation” in the straits, the official said.

Iran has said it would block the Strait of Hormuz if it was barred from using the strategic waterway through which about a fifth of oil that is consumed globally passes.

The threat from an Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) commander followed a US announcement on Monday that it would end exemptions granted last year to eight buyers of Iranian oil and demanding they stop purchases by May 1 or face sanctions.

Oil prices have surged to six-month highs.

The Strait of Hormuz, a vital shipping route linking Middle East oil producers to markets in Asia, Europe, North America and beyond, has been at the heart of regional tensions for decades. Iran has made threats to block the waterway in the past, without acting on them.



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US Secretary of State: Iran does not control Strait of Hormuz
US sanctions over Iran oil will 'intensify Mideast turmoil': China