

Nearly 150 killed in battle for Tripoli: WHO

Author:

Mon, 2019-04-15 21:07

TRIPOLI: At least 147 people have been killed and 614 wounded in the offensive launched on April 4 by Libyan military strongman Khalifa Haftar to take the capital Tripoli, the World Health Organization (WHO) said Monday.

The clashes have displaced more than 18,000 people, according to the latest figures from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Fighting broke out as Haftar's forces sought to take control of Tripoli from loyalists of the internationally backed Government of National Accord (GNA) which is based in the capital.

The rising number of casualties has prompted the WHO to deploy surgical teams "to support Tripoli-area hospitals as they cope with the influx of trauma cases," the UN agency wrote on Twitter.

At least eight ambulances have been hit during clashes in the southern outskirts of the capital, as both sides have defied international calls to halt the fighting.

WHO urged "all parties to exercise restraint and avoid causing collateral damage to hospitals, ambulances and health workers."

In addition to ground fighting, both pro-government forces and Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA) carry out daily air raids and accuse each other of targeting civilians.

The resulting casualties have left health facilities in "critical need of assistance," according to the United Nations refugee agency.

"The situation on the ground continues deteriorating and number of casualties soaring," UNHCR tweeted.



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121 killed, nearly 600 wounded in Libya fighting: WHOHaftar, El-Sisi hold talks as Libya death toll rises to 120

[Yemeni government and Houthi militants 'accept' Hodeidah troop redeployment plan](#)

Mon, 2019-04-15 17:11

LONDON: Both sides in the Yemen conflict have agreed to a new plan to redeploy their troops in the port of Hodeidah, the UN envoy to the country said on Monday.

The breakthrough comes months after a ceasefire deal for the port city was struck in Sweden between the Iran-backed Houthi militia and Yemeni government

forces.

However, implementation of the deal in Hodeidah, which became the main focus of the conflict, has stalled with the Arab coalition supporting government troops accusing the Houthis of dozens of violations of the deal.

Martin Griffiths told a Security Council meeting that the breakthrough of the two sides agreeing to a new “detailed redeployment plan” for Hodeidah was “extremely welcome.”

He said the redeployment “would be the first voluntary withdrawal of forces in this long conflict.”

“We all need to see tangible progress in Hodeida before moving to focus on the political solution,” Griffiths added.

The detailed plan on the pullback was negotiated by Danish General Michael Lollesgaard who heads a UN monitoring mission.

Following the deal on the first stage, Lollesgaard will now focus on the second phase and seek to resolve disputes over the deployment of local forces in areas from where there has been a pullback.

UN diplomats have said the Houthis refused to pull away from Hodeida ports as part of the first stage.

*With AFP



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[Martin Griffiths](#)

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Yemen's Houthi militia storing aircraft near neighborhoods in Sanaa: Arab coalition
End your crimes, Hadi tells Houthis as Yemen holds first parliamentary session since coup

[US officially designates Iran's Revolutionary Guards a terrorist group](#)

Author:

Reuters

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1555336224703817800

Mon, 2019-04-15 12:51

WASHINGTON: The United States officially designated Iran's elite Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a foreign terrorist organization, according to a notice published in the US Federal Register on Monday.

US President Donald Trump said last week he would make the symbolic but unprecedented move, which immediately was condemned by Iran and created concerns about reprisal attacks on US forces.

The IRGC is in charge of Iran's ballistic missile and nuclear programs. It also is involved with the country's banking and shipping industries. The new designation makes it easier to prosecute companies or people in the European Union that do business with Iran.

US law already punishes US persons who deal with the IRGC with up to 20 years in prison because of the group's designation under the US Specially Designated Global Terrorist list, a different US sanctions program.



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[Sudan leaders face pressure for transfer to civilian rule as protesters reject attempts to clear camp](#)

Author:

Jay Deshmukh and Abdelmoneim Abu Idris Ali | AFP

ID:

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Mon, 2019-04-15 12:39

KHARTOUM: Sudan's military rulers faced pressure from demonstrators and Western governments to hand power to a new civilian government Monday as activists warned of an attempt to disperse a 10-day-old mass protest outside army headquarters.

Thousands remained camped outside the complex in Khartoum overnight after

protest leaders issued demands to the military council set up following the ouster of veteran president Omar Al-Bashir.

The organization that spearheaded the months of protests leading to Bashir's fall, the Sudanese Professionals Association, called on their supporters to boost the numbers at the complex.

"There is an attempt to disperse the sit-in from the army headquarters area, they are trying to remove the barricades," the SPA said in a statement, without saying who was responsible.

"We call on our people to come immediately to the sit-in area to protect our revolution."

Witnesses said several army vehicles had surrounded the area and that troops were seen removing the barricades which demonstrators had put up as a security measure.

Britain's ambassador to Khartoum, Irfan Siddiq, met the new military council's deputy and stated his "top request was no violence and no attempt to forcibly break the sit in."

In the meeting with Mohammad Hamdan Daglo, widely known as Himeidti, Siddik wrote on Twitter that he also backed the SPA's call for a civilian administration.

The talks came a day after the embassies of Britain, the United States and Norway issued a joint statement saying the "legitimate change" the Sudanese people demanded had not taken place.

"It is time for the transitional military council and all other parties to enter into an inclusive dialogue to effect a transition to civilian rule," they said.

The SPA has said a transitional government and the armed forces must bring to justice both Bashir and officials from his feared National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS).

The military council on Sunday met with political parties and urged them to agree on an "independent figure" to be prime minister, an AFP correspondent at the meeting said.

"We want to set up a civilian state based on freedom, justice and democracy," a council member, Lt. Gen. Yasser Al-Ata, told members of several political parties.

A 10-member delegation representing the protesters delivered a list of demands during talks with the council late Saturday, according to a statement by the Alliance for Freedom and Change umbrella group.

But in a press conference, the council's spokesman did not respond to the protesters' latest demands.

He did however announce the appointment of a new NISS head after the intelligence agency's chief Salih Ghosh resigned on Saturday.

The foreign ministry said military council head General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan was "committed to having a complete civilian government" and urged other nations to back the council in order to achieve "the Sudanese goal of democratic transition."

In the latest shake-up, Burhan on Monday named Lt. Gen. Hashim Abdelmotalib as the army's chief of staff.

American actor George Clooney, who has campaigned hard to draw attention to the conflict in Sudan's Darfur region, over the weekend urged world powers to pressure the military "to turn over full executive power to a civilian-led transitional government."

“The most potent form of leverage would be to go after the assets laundered by Bashir and his allies through the international financial system,” Clooney wrote in a joint Washington Post column with rights activist John Prendergast.

The military council’s deputy Himeidti is a field commander for the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) counter-insurgency unit, which rights groups have accused of abuses in Darfur.

But at the protest site Monday, witnesses said demonstrators put up a banner with a photograph of Himeidti which read: “We will not forget that you stood with us.”

Burhan has pledged that individuals implicated in killing protesters would face justice and that demonstrators detained under a state of emergency imposed by Bashir during his final weeks in power would be freed.

Bashir ruled Sudan with an iron fist for 30 years before he was deposed last week following mass protests that have rocked the country since December.

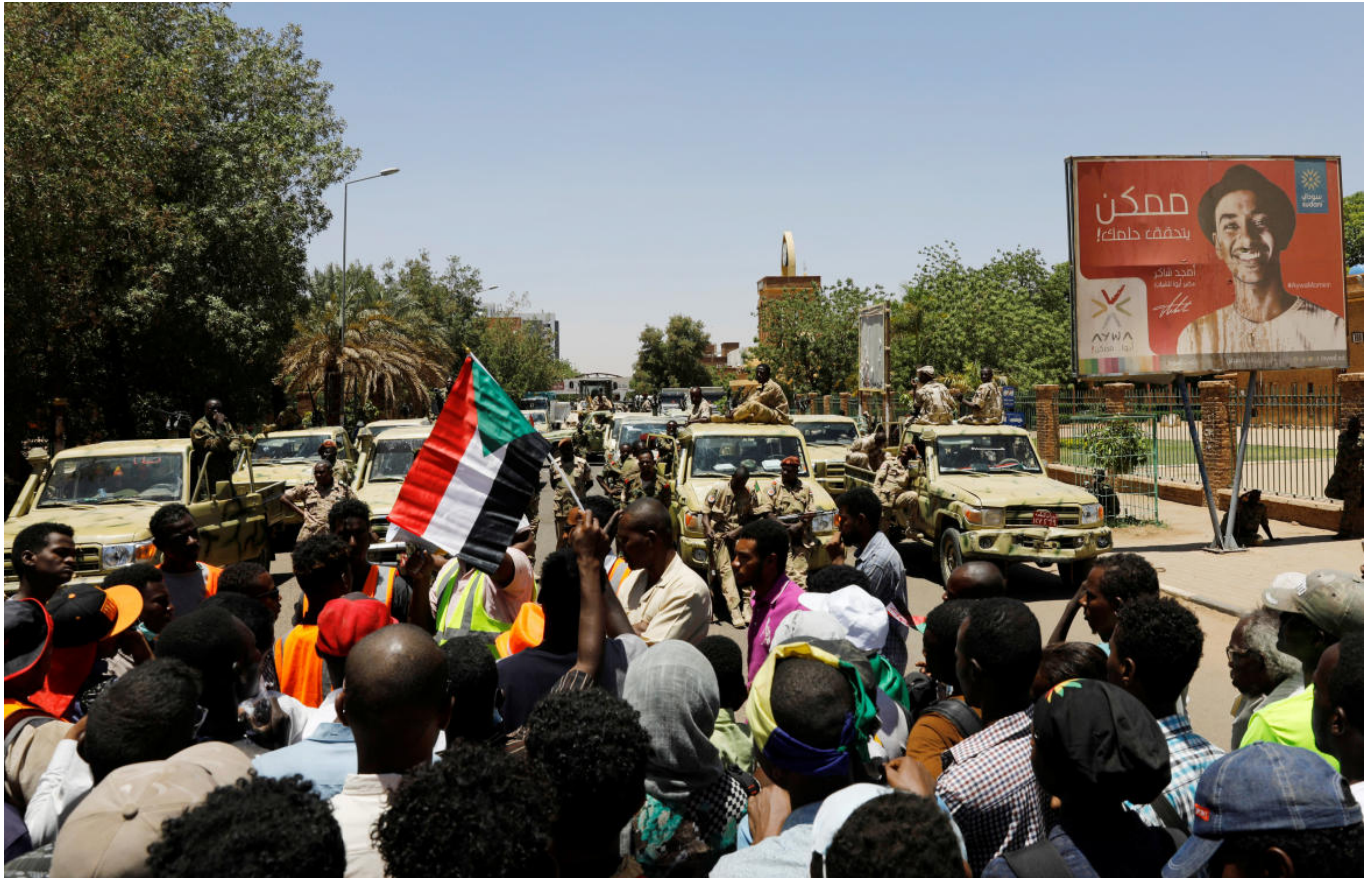
Tens of thousands of people have massed non-stop outside the army headquarters since April 6, initially urging the military to back their demand for Bashir’s removal.

But his departure in a coup failed to satisfy the protesters, who have pushed for justice for Bashir-era officials.

The SPA has also called for the confiscation of properties belonging to the ousted president’s National Congress Party and the release of soldiers who sided with their movement.

Late on Sunday, the military council said it has set up a committee to register NCP properties and seize control of them.





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Ruling military council in Sudan rejects demand for immediate civilian government
Sudan's new transitional leader promises civilian government and to 'uproot' Bashir regime

[US, France, UK navies hold Arabian Gulf mine drills off coast of Bahrain](#)

Author:

AFP

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1555331494883490500

Mon, 2019-04-15 08:17

MANAMA: The US, French and British navies have launched anti-mine exercises off Bahrain in support of the free movement of trade in Gulf waters, a military spokeswoman said Monday.

“As mines threaten maritime traffic indiscriminately, the US, France and United Kingdom are dedicated to conducting tactical training to counter the risk of mines in order to support the continued free flow of commerce and freedom of navigation in this critical region,” said the US Fifth Fleet, which has been based in Bahrain since 1995. The exercise is “purely defensive,” Lt. Chloe Morgan, a spokesperson for the US Navy, told AFP. The archipelago is also home to a permanent British military base.



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Saudi-Pak joint naval exercises conclude in Al Jubail waters Saudi Arabia-Pakistan joint naval exercises begin