

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

Author:

Reuters

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1554914380189409800

Wed, 2019-04-10 16:15

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo declined on Wednesday to publicly say the Trump administration still backs a two-state solution to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

"We are now working with many parties to share what our vision (is) as to how to solve this problem," Pompeo told a US Senate hearing where he was pressed for a response on the issue.

Earlier, Donald Trump said Benjamin Netanyahu's election victory had improved the chances of peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

Pompeo said the administration "has been working on a set of ideas" for Middle East peace "that we hope to present before too long," adding that he hoped they would provide a basis for discussions on resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Democratic Senator Tim Kaine asked Pompeo, a former Republican member of the House of Representatives, if he thought a peace agreement including one state for Israel and one state for the Palestinians was an outdated idea.

"It's certainly an idea that's been around a long time, senator," Pompeo responded.

"Ultimately the individuals in the region will sort this out," the secretary of state said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu secured re-election on Wednesday, and a record fifth term in office, with religious-rightist parties set to hand him a parliamentary majority, despite a close contest against his main centrist challenger, a vote tally showed.

In a rare turn during the campaign toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Netanyahu alarmed Palestinians by pledging to annex Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank if re-elected. Palestinians seek a state there and in the Gaza Strip, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

That came after Trump signed a proclamation during Netanyahu's visit to Washington on March 25, officially granting US recognition of the Golan Heights as Israeli territory, a dramatic departure from decades of American policy.

The move, which Trump announced in a tweet days prior, was widely seen as an attempt to boost Netanyahu as he ran for re-election on April 9.

Israel captured the Golan in the 1967 Middle East war and annexed it in 1981 in a move not recognized internationally.

The Trump administration has been promising for many months that it would roll out a Middle East peace plan after Israel's election.



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[Mike Pompeo](#)

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Netanyahu rival concedes defeat in Israeli election

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## [Viral 'Nubian queen' rally leader says women key to Sudan protests](#)

Wed, 2019-04-10 18:47

KHARTOUM: A Sudanese woman propelled to Internet fame earlier this week after leading protest chants in the capital told AFP Wednesday that women are key to the uprising against President Omar Al-Bashir's iron-fisted rule.

"Sudanese women have always participated in revolutions in this country," Ala Saleh told AFP two days after video went viral of her standing on a car, conducting crowds outside the army headquarters in Khartoum.

"If you see Sudan's history, all our queens have led the state. It's part of our heritage."

كنداكة بلدي! #اعتصام\_القيادة\_العامه [pic.twitter.com/PJvihN1bPb](https://pic.twitter.com/PJvihN1bPb)

– Mar<sup>2</sup> (@MarmarAlsayed) [April 8, 2019](https://pic.twitter.com/PJvihN1bPb)

Demonstrators have been camped outside the military complex for days asking the army to back them in demands that Bashir step down.

“I’m very proud to take part in this revolution and I hope our revolution will achieve its goal,” Saleh said.

In the clips, she stands atop a car wearing an elegant, long white dress as she sings and works the crowd, her golden moon earrings reflecting light from the sea of camera phones surrounding her.

[pic.twitter.com/JZrNu6qhKo](https://pic.twitter.com/JZrNu6qhKo)

– مليونية 16 أبريل # [J0tααθ](https://pic.twitter.com/JZrNu6qhKo) | جُوتارو (@ahmed\_awad1997) [April 8, 2019](https://pic.twitter.com/JZrNu6qhKo)

Dubbed online as “Kandaka,” or Nubian queen, she has become a symbol of the protests which she says have traditionally had a female backbone in Sudan. Women have made up a large part of the demonstrators that since Saturday have thronged outside the sprawling army complex.

Braving regular volleys of tear gas, the crowds have been the biggest yet to rally against Al-Bashir’s rule since unrest broke out in late December.

“In such movements, women are widely participating not only for their rights but for the rights of the entire community... there’s no difference between women’s rights and community rights,” said Saleh.

“Women of Sudan always encourage their youths to fight. This is part of the history of Kandaka,” she added.

الكنداكة السودانية الملهمه آلاء صلاح التي لُقبت بأيقونة الثورة السودانية تنابعوها اليوم في مداخلة على شاشة #العربية في برنامج تفاعلكم الساعة 0 بتوقيت الخرطوم. #العربية #السودان [pic.twitter.com/C9f00mzRY9](https://pic.twitter.com/C9f00mzRY9)

– رفيده ياسين (@Rofaidayassin) [April 10, 2019](https://pic.twitter.com/C9f00mzRY9)

Saleh said she has taken part in the protests since they first erupted on Dec. 19 in response to a government decision to triple the price of bread. The unrest quickly morphed into a nationwide campaign against Bashir’s rule with rallies held across cities, towns and villages.

The longtime leader has remained defiant and imposed a slew of tough measures including a state of emergency across the country.

Officials say 49 people have died in protest-related violence so far.

Taken by me@lana\_hago#8aprile [pic.twitter.com/o7pDUsOg84](https://pic.twitter.com/o7pDUsOg84)

– Lana H. Haroun (@lana\_hago) [April 8, 2019](#)



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[Omar Al-Bashir](#)

Sudan protesters rally for fifth day outside army HQ Tear gas, gun fire outside army HQ as Sudan protests press on

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## [Iran orders 60,000 to evacuate flood-hit oil city: state media](#)

Author:

AFP

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1554896604547513300

Wed, 2019-04-10 11:39

AHVAZ, Iran: Iran ordered residents of five districts of the southwestern city of Ahvaz to evacuate immediately on Wednesday as floodwaters entered the capital of key oil-producing Khuzestan province, state television reported. The province's governor, Gholamreza Shariati, said he ordered the evacuations as a "precautionary and preventive move to avert any danger," Iran's Tasnim news agency reported.

The five districts have an estimated population of between 60,000 and 70,000.



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Pakistan sends first planeload of aid to flood-hit Iran  
India delays order for Iran oil, pending sanctions waiver clarity

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## [Sudan protesters rally for fifth day outside army HQ](#)

Author:

AFP

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1554894929257342700

Wed, 2019-04-10 11:13

KHARTOUM: Thousands of Sudanese protesters were camped outside army headquarters for a fifth day on Wednesday demanding President Omar Al-Bashir step down, after the police ordered their forces not to intervene.

In what has become the biggest challenge yet to Bashir's three decades of iron-fisted rule, crowds of demonstrators thronged the sprawling complex through the night, singing and dancing to the tunes of revolutionary songs, witnesses said.

Hundreds of mobile phones were held aloft, shining a sea of lights on the tide of people massed outside the buildings.

"The night passed peacefully without any incident," said one protester who spent the entire night at the complex.

"We believe that the support from the soldiers on the ground and now the police is definitely growing."

However, Bashir loyalists have called for a support rally for the president on Thursday, and urged all members of the ruling party to take part.

"The National Congress Party's executive bureau supports the national dialogue partners' initiative to organize a gathering to be seen by all the people on Thursday," the acting chief of Bashir's ruling party, Ahmed Harun, said in a statement.

"I call on all members of NCP across the state of Khartoum to participate in



this rally.”

The anti-government demonstrators have braved regular volleys of tear gas from members of the powerful National Intelligence and Security Service since they began camping at the army headquarters on April 6, protest organizers say.

But for the first time overnight Tuesday they did not face any “threat” from security agents during the night, said the protester who did not want to be named for security reasons.

“The soldiers at the complex are also angry after the attacks of tear gas and are determined to prevent them,” another demonstrator told AFP.

Witnesses said the troops had stationed several vehicles loaded with machine-guns at the gates of the complex, which also houses Bashir’s residence and the defense ministry.

On Tuesday, security agents had to abort bids to disperse the crowds when soldiers fired in the air to counter incoming volleys of tear gas from security agents.

“It seems the police too are now with us,” said the protester.

“When we were coming to the army building last night we saw many policemen but they did not stop us.”

The police on Tuesday ordered its officers on Tuesday to avoid intervening against the demonstrators.

“We call on God to preserve the security and calm of our country ... and to unite the Sudanese people... for an agreement which would support the peaceful transition of power,” a police spokesman said in a statement.

On Wednesday, protesters were raising funds to ensure a regular supply of food and water for the crowd.

“Many shop owners and businessmen have offered us free supplies,” said another demonstrator.

Protest organizers launched their latest campaign on Saturday as part of a months-long movement against Bashir’s 30-year rule.

Demonstrations first erupted on December 19 in response to a government decision to triple the price of bread.

But they quickly mushroomed into a nationwide campaign against Bashir’s rule with rallies held across cities, towns and villages.

Bashir has remained defiant, and imposed a slew of tough measures including a nationwide state of emergency, which has led to scores of arrests of journalists and activists.

Officials say 38 people have died in protest-related violence so far.

On Tuesday, the United States, Britain and Norway for the first time threw their weight behind the protesters, calling for a credible political transition plan in Sudan.

“The time has come for the Sudanese authorities to respond to these popular demands in a serious” way, the so-called troika of Western diplomatic players said.

“The Sudanese authorities must now respond and deliver a credible plan for this political transition.”

Defense Minister General Awad Ibnouf has vowed the army would prevent any slide into chaos.

“Sudan’s armed forces understand the reasons for the demonstrations and is not against the demands and aspirations of the citizens, but it will not allow the country to fall into chaos,” Ibnouf said on Monday, according to

state media.

The umbrella group spearheading the protests has meanwhile appealed to the army for talks on forming a transitional government.



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Western nations call for Sudan 'transition plan' Tear gas, gun fire outside army HQ as Sudan protests press on

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## [Battle for Tripoli escalates as UN prepares to meet](#)

Author:

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1554895098227362900

Wed, 2019-04-10 11:13

TRIPOLI: The battle for Libya's capital intensified as the UN Security Council prepared to meet Wednesday to discuss the crisis gripping the North African country, where armed rivals are locked in a deadly power struggle. The closed-door talks in New York come a day after the United Nations postponed a Libyan national conference aimed at drawing up an election roadmap because of fighting raging on Tripoli's doorstep.

Libya has been riven by divisions since the NATO-backed overthrow of dictator Muammar Qaddafi in 2011, with various armed groups and two parallel governments vying for territory and oil wealth.

Heavy arms fire was heard during much of the night in the Ain Zara district on the southeastern outskirts of Tripoli as strongman Khalifa Haftar's forces pressed an assault aimed at taking the capital from the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA).

"The clashes have intensified. We're afraid to leave the house," a resident told AFP by telephone from the area, where roads were reported to have been blocked, hindering people's efforts to flee.

The violence has already displaced thousands and left several dozen people dead.

The UN warned that nearly half a million children in Tripoli were "at immediate risk."

Haftar's self-styled Libyan National Army (LNA), which controls swathes of the country's east, said it had seized a barracks in the Aziziya area around 50 kilometers (31 miles) south of Tripoli after "ferocious clashes."

It said several fighters loyal to the UN-backed government had been detained and their weapons seized.

The internationally recognized government carried out several air raids against LNA positions south of Tripoli, and also hit supply lines in central Libya, GNA spokesman Col. Mohamed Gnounou said Tuesday.

Haftar's forces appear to be advancing on two fronts, from the south and southeast of Tripoli, while coastal roads to the east and west of the city are defended by fighters loyal to the GNA.

Haftar has defied international calls, including from the UN Security Council and the United States, to halt the surprise offensive launched on Thursday. The UN's high commissioner for refugees, Filippo Grandi, called for the warring parties to "spare civilians, including refugees and migrants trapped in the country."

The UN children's agency (UNICEF) urged all parties "to refrain from committing grave violations" against children, including the recruitment of child soldiers.

"Nearly half a million children in Tripoli and tens of thousands more in the western areas are at a direct risk due to the intensification of fighting," it said.

The GNA's health ministry on Monday put the death toll in the fighting at 35. Haftar's forces have said 14 of their fighters have died.

The UN said the clashes have displaced some 3,400 people.

Led by Fayez Al-Sarraj, the GNA's authority is not recognized by a parallel administration in the east of the country, which is allied with Haftar.



LNA spokesman Ahmad Al-Mesmari accused the unity government of “allying itself with Islamist militias” from the city of Misrata 200 kilometers (120 miles) east of the capital.

International efforts to end the Libyan conflict have repeatedly failed. Rival leaders agreed last year to hold elections before December 10, 2018 under a French plan, but that vote never materialized.

The national conference, which had been scheduled for April 14-16 in the central city of Ghadames, aimed to fix dates for legislative and presidential elections, and work toward a new constitution.

UN envoy Ghassan Salame, announcing its postponement, said: “We cannot ask people to take part in the conference during gunfire and air strikes.”

He expressed hope the meeting would take place “as soon as possible.”

Haftar, whose key allies are the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Russia, is a former Qaddafi military chief who has emerged as a major player in Libya’s political struggle.

His offensive threatens to plunge the country into a full-blown civil war and has thrown into sharp relief the divisions between world powers over how to end the chaos that has riven Libya since 2011.



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UN chief calls for immediate halt to Libya fighting