

Egypt, US sign 7 grant deals worth \$125m

Tue, 2021-11-02 20:11

CAIRO: Egypt's Minister of International Cooperation Rania Al-Mashat announced the signing of seven grant agreements with the US Agency for International Development worth a total of \$125 million.

The agreements come within the framework of the joint economic relations program between the two countries in order to support the implementation of Egypt's development vision.

Al-Mashat noted that the announced agreements will stimulate the state's development efforts in the fields of education, science and technology, agriculture, health, economic governance, trade and investment. A grant worth \$5 million was also directed to the health sector earlier to improve the country's response to the pandemic.

Al-Mashat revealed that Egypt's International Cooperation Ministry, the National Council for Women and the World Economic Forum had also launched the "Closing the Gender Gap Accelerator" initiative – the first of its kind in Africa and the Middle East – which takes institutional measures to empower women.

She explained that the ministry is seeking to agree on a new partnership with USAID to help achieve the goals of the initiative to "bridge the gender gap, improve the work environment for women in the private sector, and enhance financial inclusion for women."

US Ambassador Jonathan Cohen said: "I am pleased to announce \$125 million in economic aid from the US to Egypt. This assistance is part of the US government's \$30 billion investment in Egypt over the past 40 years, which has brought about clean water and wastewater services to 25 million Egyptians, eliminated polio, built 2,000 schools, and provide 4,000 university scholarships."

Egypt's development cooperation portfolio with USAID has recorded about \$900 million since 2014, while the partnership portfolio between Egypt and the US since 1978 amounts to around \$30 billion.



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[Rania Al-Mashat](#)

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Egypt, US in Red Sea naval exercises to support regional security
Egypt, US foreign ministers discuss cooperation amid coronavirus outbreak

[‘The world is watching,’ US tells Sudan’s military](#)

Author:

Tue, 2021-11-02 19:33

LONDON: The US special envoy for the Horn of Africa on Tuesday urged Sudan’s military to re-establish civilian rule, warning that “the world is watching.”

At a press briefing attended by Arab News, Jeffrey Feltman said: “The events of Oct. 25 in Sudan and the days since are a grave setback. The United States will continue to stand with the people of Sudan in their non-violent struggle

to advance the goals of Sudan's revolution."

On Oct. 25, military leaders dissolved Sudan's transitional government and detained its civilian leaders, who had been steering the country toward democratic rule.

Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, who had been calling for full civilian rule to replace the civil-military power-sharing that had been in place since the 2019 revolution, was confined to house arrest.

"We remain extremely concerned about Sudan's democratic trajectory after the military takeover," Feltman said, adding that the military has "hijacked and betrayed the aspirations of the Sudanese people for a peaceful, democratic country, as evidenced by the 2019 peaceful revolution and enshrined in that year's constitutional declaration."

The 2019 revolution saw the overthrow of dictator Omar Bashir after three decades in power. A large-scale civilian-led movement engaged in peaceful protest and civil disobedience for months until the military enacted a coup against him.

The transitional government was then formed, comprising both civilian and military leaders and aimed at delivering long-term stability and democracy.

Feltman said the international community is largely in agreement in its support for the civilian government.

"The international community, from the African Union, to the Arab League, to the UN Security Council and to international financial institutions, have signaled loudly their deep concern about the military's unconscionable actions," he added. "We join them in calling for the immediate restoration of democratic governance in Sudan."

Since the October coup, protests have seen many Sudanese people killed and injured at the hands of security forces.

"We urge the military to release all civilians detained in connection with the unacceptable events of Oct. 25, and to ensure that any who had been injured receive necessary medical care without interference," Feltman said.

The US has previously suspended huge amounts of funding it had been providing to the new Sudanese government, but Feltman said humanitarian aid is exempt from this.

"I've admired the courage of the Sudanese people in demanding that their voices are heard, and in helping their country make strides toward a new democratic Sudan," he added.

"To those freedom-loving Sudanese, and to those that would seek to rob them of their democratic ambition, I say: The world is watching."



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Demand for special UN rights council meet after Sudan coup
Sudanese ex-ruling party head Ghandour re-arrested

[Mikati fears slippery slope if Lebanese-Saudi crisis is not resolved](#)

Author:

Mon, 2021-11-01 23:11

BEIRUT: Lebanon's Prime Minister Najib Mikati said on Monday Beirut faces a slippery slope in its growing diplomatic row with the Gulf following controversial comments made by Information Minister George Kordahi on the Arab coalition's intervention in Yemen.

Mikati, who is in Scotland to participate in the COP26 climate summit, sent a message on Monday via WhatsApp to government ministers, in which he wrote that he had “asked Kordahi to prioritize his patriotism over everything else, but this has not happened.”

Mikati added: “We are consequently facing a slippery slope.”

The prime minister also said: “If we do not resolve this crisis quickly, we will fall into a disaster that none of us wants. God bears witness that I have warned against this.”

Kordahi has failed so far to apologize for his remarks, and appeared to rule out offering his resignation in a statement on Sunday.

Saudi Arabia believes Kordahi’s statements to be offensive and represent “a new episode of reprehensible and rejected positions issued by Lebanese officials towards the Kingdom and its policies, in addition to Beirut’s failure to take the measures to stop the export of narcotics from Lebanon.”

Beirut has not yet taken any measure to restore ties between the two states, nor Lebanon’s relations with other Gulf nations that have shown solidarity with Saudi Arabia, especially Kuwait, Bahrain and the UAE.

Mikati’s warning came as DHL in Lebanon returned mail and goods to customers who wanted them shipped to Saudi Arabia.

“The DHL administration was informed by the company’s branch in Saudi Arabia on Saturday that no packages can be shipped to the Kingdom, but there are no instructions so far regarding the fate of shipments from Saudi Arabia to Lebanon,” a source told Arab News on Monday, adding “we have returned all packages to our customers and we are yet to receive new instructions.”

This measure falls within the Saudi decision to cut diplomatic and economic ties with Lebanon, which was taken on Oct. 29, against the backdrop of the comments made by Kordahi a month before he was appointed.

Hezbollah’s Mohammed Fneish continued to defend Kordahi and criticized those who stood by the importance of Lebanese-Saudi ties, describing their positions as “demonstrating weakness.”

Fneish said: “If we stand our ground, we will be able to overcome these issues, just as we did many problems and challenges that we faced in the past.”

The website of the National News Agency, the official news agency of the Lebanese state, supervised by Kordahi, was hacked on Saturday afternoon.

Pictures were published on the website containing threats against Kordahi, and the website has since been suspended.

While political observers in Lebanon unanimously agree that Kordahi’s resignation would be the most positive outcome, they believe Mikati’s hands are tied since Shiite government ministers threatened to boycott Cabinet if

Tarek Bitar, the judge leading the investigation into the Beirut port blast, is not removed.

The same ministers to have dissented over Bitar are also among those to have also voiced their objection to Kordahi's removal.

Mikati's media office reported that he held meetings with several officials on the sidelines of the COP26 summit to discuss Lebanon's crises, especially the dispute with Saudi Arabia.

Mikati met with French President Emmanuel Macron and the President of the European Council Charles Michel.

He then met with the Managing Director of the IMF Kristalina Georgieva, the Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi, and outgoing German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Mikati also spoke with Lebanese President Michel Aoun over the phone and discussed "possible measures to address the recent developments."



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Pressure mounts for removal of Lebanese information minister over Gulf row
Saudi Arabia's King Salman thanks leaders of Kuwait, Bahrain for Lebanon stance

What to expect following Biden's meeting with Erdogan

Author:

Mon, 2021-11-01 23:02

ANKARA: The much-awaited meeting between US President Joe Biden and his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Rome on Sunday focused on several topics of longstanding disagreement between the two NATO allies.

During the meeting, Biden noted Turkey's importance as an ally and its defense partnership with the US, but also raised his concerns about the Russian-made S-400 missile system on Turkish soil that poses a threat to NATO systems, especially amid talk of further purchases of Russian missiles.

Biden also emphasized the importance of strong democratic institutions and respect for human rights, although no details were given of specific human rights issues raised during the meeting, which came days after 10 foreign ambassadors in Turkey, including the US envoy, called for the release of jailed philanthropist Osman Kavala and for the respecting of a ruling by the European Court of Human Rights in a joint statement.

The Turkish presidential office said in a statement that the meeting was held in a positive atmosphere, and both leaders expressed their willingness to "further strengthen and improve Turkey-US relations and agreed to set up a common mechanism accordingly."

Caroline Rose, senior analyst at the New Lines Institute for Strategy and Policy, told Arab News: "There is limited space for cooperation between Turkey and the US, but it's unlikely in the near-term that relations will be able to experience a substantial reset or significant rapprochement."

She added that with Turkey seeking to purchase a second S-400 missile system, rising tensions with Kurdish forces and allied US troops in northeast Syria, and the ripples from the recent diplomatic crisis over Kavala, the Biden administration is hesitant about relying too heavily on its relationship with Ankara.

"Turkey will continue to prove a useful partner against Iran in the Middle East as the US conducts further personnel reduction, as it pivots to Asia. It's also possible for limited US-Turkey cooperation if tensions continue to de-escalate in the Eastern Mediterranean, opening a potential door to increased ties," she said.

Soner Cagaptay, director of the Turkish program at the Washington Institute, underlined two reasons that might have pushed the US towards de-escalation with Turkey.

"Every time there is a crisis between Ankara and Washington, the consensus is (on) not ignoring Ankara and keeping it anchored inside NATO. (The) White House follows the same policy once again," he said.

The Turkish parliament recently ratified a motion to extend troop deployment in Iraq and Syria for another two years, while Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar and US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin held a phone call last week to discuss regional defense and security issues.

For Cagaptay, another reason for this bilateral meeting is related to Turkey's imminent operations in northern Syria to undermine territories held by the US-backed Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units.

"I think the US administration pushes for the meeting to take place (to) talk about the specifics of such a potential incursion and its mechanisms if this were to happen," he said.

"But at some zones, the operation would require US troops not to stand in the way of Turkish troops. Both parties would want to see US troops out of harm's way," added Cagaptay.

In the meantime, Turkey recently expressed interest in buying 40 Lockheed Martin-made F-16s and another 80 modernization kits for its existing warplanes, but the sale would require the approval of Congress.

By purchasing F-16s, Ankara also wants to recover a \$1.4 billion payment made just before it was kicked out of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program because of its purchase of the S-400s.

Asked whether he was planning to provide Turkey with F-16s, Biden said they were "planning to have a good conversation." However, Cagaptay thinks such a deal will face resistance in Congress over the S-400 deal.

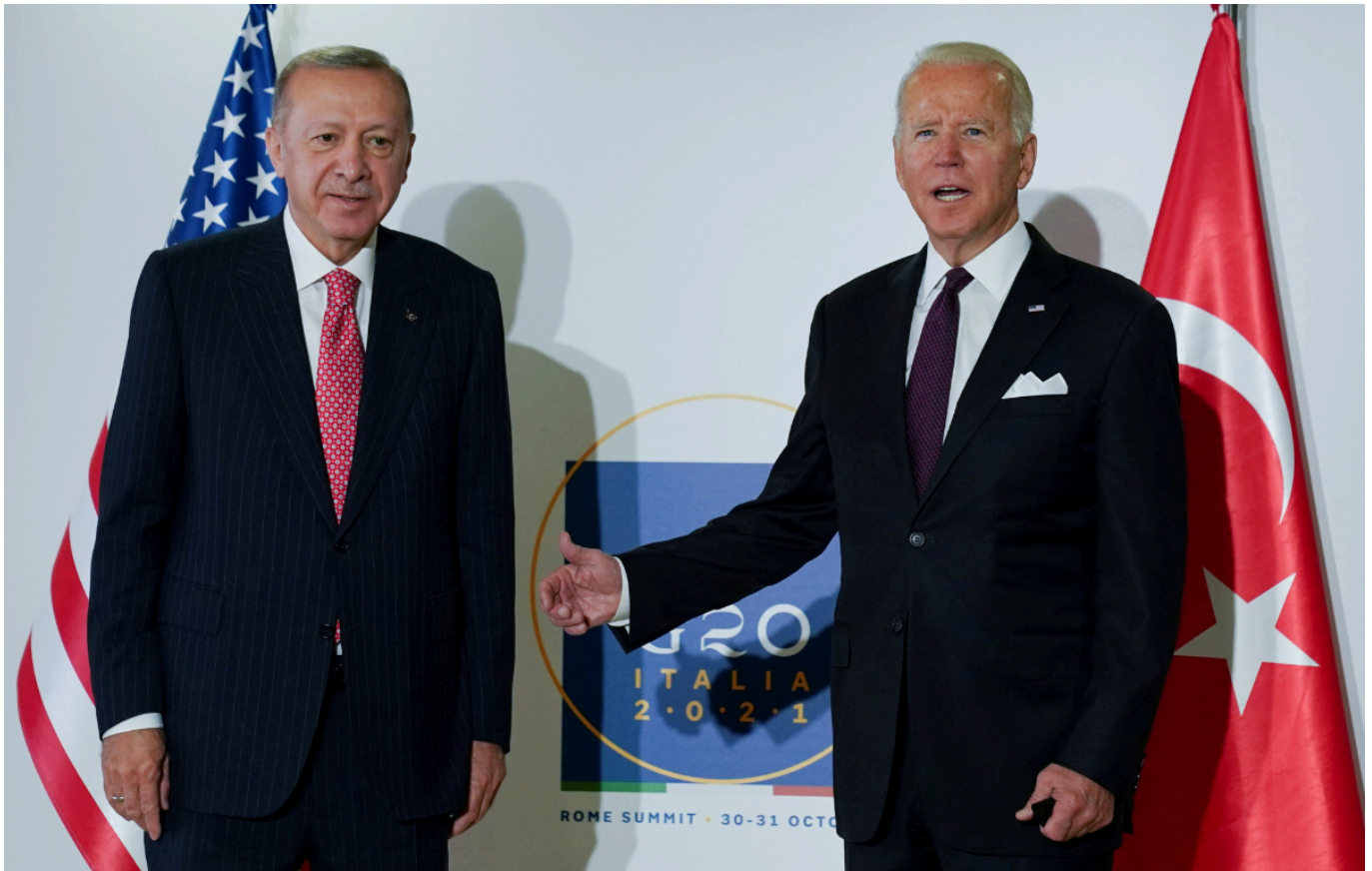
Turkish and US defense delegations had a meeting on the F-35s this week in Ankara, with experts thinking the issue could undermine Turkish-US ties.

"There is a strict separation of powers in the US political system, and Congress has a majority of opposition voices about this crucial sale," Cagaptay said.

The political process in Syria, humanitarian assistance for civilians in Afghanistan, elections in Libya, the situation in the Eastern Mediterranean and diplomatic efforts in the South Caucasus also formed part of the bilateral agenda during the Biden-Erdogan meeting.

According to Cagaptay, the Biden administration wants to keep dialogue channels open with Erdogan, especially to encourage Ankara to play an active role in maintaining flights in and out of the Afghan capital Kabul, and to contribute to airport security.

Biden and Erdogan last met in June to discuss whether Turkey could secure and operate the Kabul International Airport, but the plans failed after the rapid takeover of the country by Taliban forces.



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Turkey's Erdogan says he has signed \$3.2bn green climate fund deal Biden to use COP26 to ramp up pressure on Congress climate change funding vote

[UAE says all diplomats, citizens have returned 'safely' from Lebanon](#)

Author:

Mon, 2021-11-01 21:53

DUBAI: The UAE announced on Monday that all its diplomats, embassy staff and citizens have returned from Lebanon, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MoFAIC) said.

On Sunday, the UAE called on its citizens present in Lebanon to return to the Emirates as soon as possible to ensure their safety, following a diplomatic row that was sparked in solidarity with Saudi Arabia over controversial comments made by the Lebanese information minister that were critical to the Kingdom.

“The ministry attributed the development to the UAE’s decision to recall its diplomats and administration staff from Lebanon and bar Emirati citizens to travel to the country owing to the current security and political situation there,” the MoFAIC statement said.

“Out of the UAE’s determination on ensuring the safety of its citizens abroad, the ministry contacted UAE national in Lebanon to coordinate their return back home,” said Khalid Belhoul, the ministry’s undersecretary. He added that the ministry was following up on the procedures of all citizens in Lebanon until their safe return to the country.



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UAE calls on citizens in Lebanon to return as soon as possible
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