

Doctor in Lebanon needs two motorcycles and a car to dodge traffic, reach woman in labor

Tue, 2021-08-24 20:03

BEIRUT: Lebanon's massive fuel crisis obliged a doctor to use two motorcycles and a car to dodge roadblocks caused by petrol station queues and attend his patient's urgent delivery operation. In less than an hour, Lebanese obstetrician-gynecologist Dr. Julien Lahoud was forced to take unusual commuting methods to reach his patient, who was in labor since 8 a.m. Monday morning.

"My patient was in her ninth month, and I had previously operated on her for a C-section," Lahoud told Arab News on Tuesday, recounting what had happened due to blocked roads.

He said the "patient was in pain, and it took her a few hours to reach the hospital" in Ghazir, eastern Beirut.

The doctor had left his Beirut clinic toward Jounieh (around 25 km away) but was stuck in heavy, bumper-to-bumper traffic caused by roadblocks and kilometers-long queues of cars waiting at stations along the Beirut-Dawra-Dbayyeh-Jounieh highway.

"Recently, we've been seeing cars queueing at petrol stations. As a precautionary measure, I have been keeping a bicycle in my car trunk and have used it for short distances," said Lahoud, explaining that would not have been an option for Monday's incident.

Monday traffic was at a near standstill, and the first part of the doctor's route to Ghazir had to be on a motorcycle.

"I arranged for a car ride at some point where traffic had eased up near Dbayyeh. The car moved for some distance but traffic came at a complete halt after the Nahr Al-Kalb tunnel," he said.

Not thinking twice, he opened the car window and stopped the first motorcyclist he spotted. "Without even knowing the motorcyclist, I didn't hesitate to ask if he could give me a quick lift to the hospital. He instantly said yes," Lahoud said, calling the motorcyclist "gallant" and a "savior."

A public health professional, Lahoud explained that his patient's medical situation was critical, as she had already had a C-section, and time was a major factor.

"Mercifully, I arrived on time and she had a smooth delivery. Her husband arrived late due to traffic."

Lahoud took to social media to share his experience, saying that both mother and child fared well, though the same could not be said of his country.

"Lebanon is NOT fine," he wrote.

I was delivered to do an urgent delivery. Both Mom and baby are fine. However Lebanon is NOT fine [#لبنان_ليس_بخير #لبنان_بنهار](#)
pic.twitter.com/jZ1W865jN8

– julien lahoud (@julienlahoud) [August 23, 2021](#)

Doctors have been acutely suffering the effects of the fuel crisis and blocked roads in the past few weeks, Lahoud said.

“There are some petrol station owners who used to refuel our tanks, but unfortunately we are hesitant to approach them anymore because they are constantly angered by this ongoing crisis,” he said, explaining that doctors have had to rely on each other up for support.

Lebanon’s fuel prices are expected to double after the state decided on Saturday to change the exchange rate used to price petroleum products in a bid to ease crippling shortages that have brought the country to a standstill.

Roads have been clogged across Lebanon as motorists have queued for the little gasoline left. Meanwhile, prices soar on the black market, and some confrontations over gasoline have turned deadly.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Lebanon](#)

[Lebanon fuel crisis](#)

[obstetrician](#)

[gynecologist](#)

Crisis-hit Lebanon to reopen classrooms starting next month
Prices at pump soar in Lebanon after new subsidy cut

[Algeria says cutting diplomatic ties with Morocco](#)

Tue, 2021-08-24 19:22

ALGIERS: Algeria is cutting diplomatic relations with Morocco, Foreign Minister Ramdane Lamamra said on Tuesday at a news conference, accusing its neighbor of "hostile actions."

Morocco and Algeria have had strained relations for decades, mainly over the issue of Western Sahara, and the border between the two countries has been closed since 1994.

"The Moroccan kingdom has never stopped its hostile actions against Algeria," he said.

Morocco's Foreign Ministry could not be immediately reached for comment. King

Mohammed VI has called for improved ties with Algeria. The cutting of diplomatic relations is effective from Tuesday but consulates in each country will remain open, Lamamra said. Algeria last week said lethal wildfires were the work of groups it has labelled terrorist, one of which it said was backed by Morocco. Lamamra cited what he called Moroccan support for one of those groups, which seeks autonomy in Algeria's Kabylie region, and said Rabat had spied on Algerian officials and failed to meet bilateral obligations including over Western Sahara. Algeria backs the Polisario movement that seeks independence for Western Sahara, which Morocco regards as part of its own territory.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Algeria](#)

[Morocco](#)

[Ramdane Lamamra](#)

[Polisario](#)

Algeria to review relations with Morocco after 'hostile acts' Algeria forest fires extinguished: emergency services

Tunisian president extends suspension of parliament's work

Author:

Reuters

ID:

1629760212100125700

Tue, 2021-08-24 02:09

TUNIS: Tunisian President Kais Saied extended on Monday the suspension of parliament until further notice, the presidency said. He also extended the suspension of the immunity of members of parliament. Saied last month dismissed his prime minister, froze parliament and assumed executive authority in a sudden intervention that his Islamist opponents have labeled a coup but that he said was necessary to save the country from collapse.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Aid groups: Millions in Syria, Iraq

Losing access to water

Author:

AP

ID:

1629758084879852600

Tue, 2021-08-24 01:33

BEIRUT: Millions of people in Syria and Iraq are at risk of losing access to water, electricity and food amid rising temperatures, record low water levels due to lack of rainfall and drought, international aid groups warned on Monday.

The two neighboring countries, both battered by years of conflict and mismanagement, are in need of rapid action to combat severe water shortages, the groups said.

The drought is also disrupting electricity supplies as low water levels impact dams, which in turn impact essential infrastructure, including health facilities.

More than 12 million people in both countries are affected, including 5 million in Syria who are directly dependent on the Euphrates River.

In Iraq, the loss of access to water from the Euphrates and Tigris River, and drought, threaten at least 7 million people.

Some 400 sq. km of agricultural land faces drought, the groups said, adding that two dams in northern Syria, supplying power to 3 million people, face imminent closure.

Carsten Hansen, regional director for the Norwegian Refugee Council, one of the aid groups behind the warning, said that for hundreds of thousands of Iraqis still displaced and many more still fleeing for their lives in Syria, the unfolding water crisis "will soon become an unprecedented catastrophe pushing more into displacement."

Other aid groups included Mercy Corps, the Danish Refugee Council, CARE international, ACTED and Action Against Hunger.

They warned that several Syrian provinces – including Hassakah, Aleppo and Raqqa in the north and Deir Ezzor in the east – have witnessed a rise in water-borne diseases.

The areas include displacement settlements housing tens of thousands of people displaced in Syria's 10-year conflict.

CARE's regional chief for Mideast and North Africa, Nirvana Shawky, urged authorities and donor governments to act swiftly to save lives.

The latest crisis comes on top of war, COVID-19 and severe economic decline, she said.

"There is no time to waste," said Gerry Garvey of the Danish Refugee Council, adding that the water crisis is likely to increase conflict in an already destabilized region.

Severe water shortages have also hit Lebanon, which is mired in the worst economic and financial crisis in its modern history, where more than 4 million people – mainly vulnerable children and families – face critical water shortages in the coming days, the UN's children agency warned last week.

In Lebanon, severe fuel shortages have also halted the work of thousands of

private generators long relied on for electricity in the corruption-plagued country.

UNICEF called for urgent restoration of the power supply to keep water services running.

Lebanon's rivers are also heavily polluted.

Activists have long warned about pollution levels caused by sewage and waste in the Litani River, the country's longest and a major source for water supply, irrigation and hydroelectricity.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

In Germany, Syrians worry Afghan crisis could fuel anti-migrant vote
Graft and security issues feed the trade in Iraq's past

[Copper mining in nature reserve sparks debate between Jordanian government and environmentalists](#)

Author:

Mon, 2021-08-23 23:33

AMMAN: Jordanian government officials have been embroiled in a debate regarding the decision to mine for copper in parts of the Dana Natural Reserve, one of the sites being considered by UNESCO as part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Former Environment Minister Yaseen Khayyat argued that any change in the area of the reserve would cause a reevaluation of the Jordanian application to UNESCO and could lead to a refusal by the world body.

Khayyat said the mining plans could affect the environmental equilibrium in this rich environmental reserve.

The International Council for Monuments and Sites in Jordan, headed by former UNESCO goodwill ambassador Princess Dana Firas, issued an international call for protection of the reserve and called on the government to immediately reverse its decision.

The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature said it opposed any redrawing of the boundaries and that it would take "all legal and escalatory measures under Jordanian law" to protect the country's nature reserves.

Khalid Al-Irani is president of the RSCN, which is responsible for the site, and he described the announcement as a "black day" for Jordan.

Dana is Jordan's largest natural reserve, covering some 320 sq km of mountains and wadis along the Great Rift Valley.

It is home to a wide variety of plant and animal species, many of which are rare and endangered.

Environmentalists argue the decision is short-sighted, while the government insists it is necessary and will not have any lasting negative environmental effects.

Speaking at an event for World Humanitarian Day, organized by the JONAF coalition of Jordanian development agencies, former minister Yusuf Mansur called the decision "short-sighted"

The Dana Reserve was no longer emphasized as a center for tourist attractions in Jordan, said Mansur.

"We must not replace largely natural profit with little profit."

The government said that, since 2016, there had been an agreement with an international contracting company to look into the possibility of mining but that the RSCN had blocked its efforts to access the intended sites.

The government said it was well aware of the environmental importance of the nature reserve and that the mining decision would not affect it.

The government has even suggested making a piece of land available that will be equal to the one that will be cut from the reserve for copper mining.

The cash-strapped government has said that copper mining could bring in badly needed revenues to the country and will employ thousands of Jordanians.

Environmentalists and economists have questioned those claims, saying the gains would be relatively small.

Maher Hijazin, former director of the Natural Resources Authority, said that copper mining could bring in as much as JOD3 billion (\$4.23 billion) to JOD4 billion in the coming 20 years and that it would employ 1,000 Jordanians.

But the size of the revenue was questioned by Mansur.

“In 20 years, the annual revenue will be about JOD30 million,” he tweeted. “Therefore, there is no reason to be greedy.”



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Copper mining](#)

Copper hits record high on higher demand hopesCopper hits 9-1/2-yr high on tight supply, solid demand