

# Hezbollah's Iranian weapons undermine Lebanon, US national security: Joe Biden

Tue, 2021-07-20 23:52

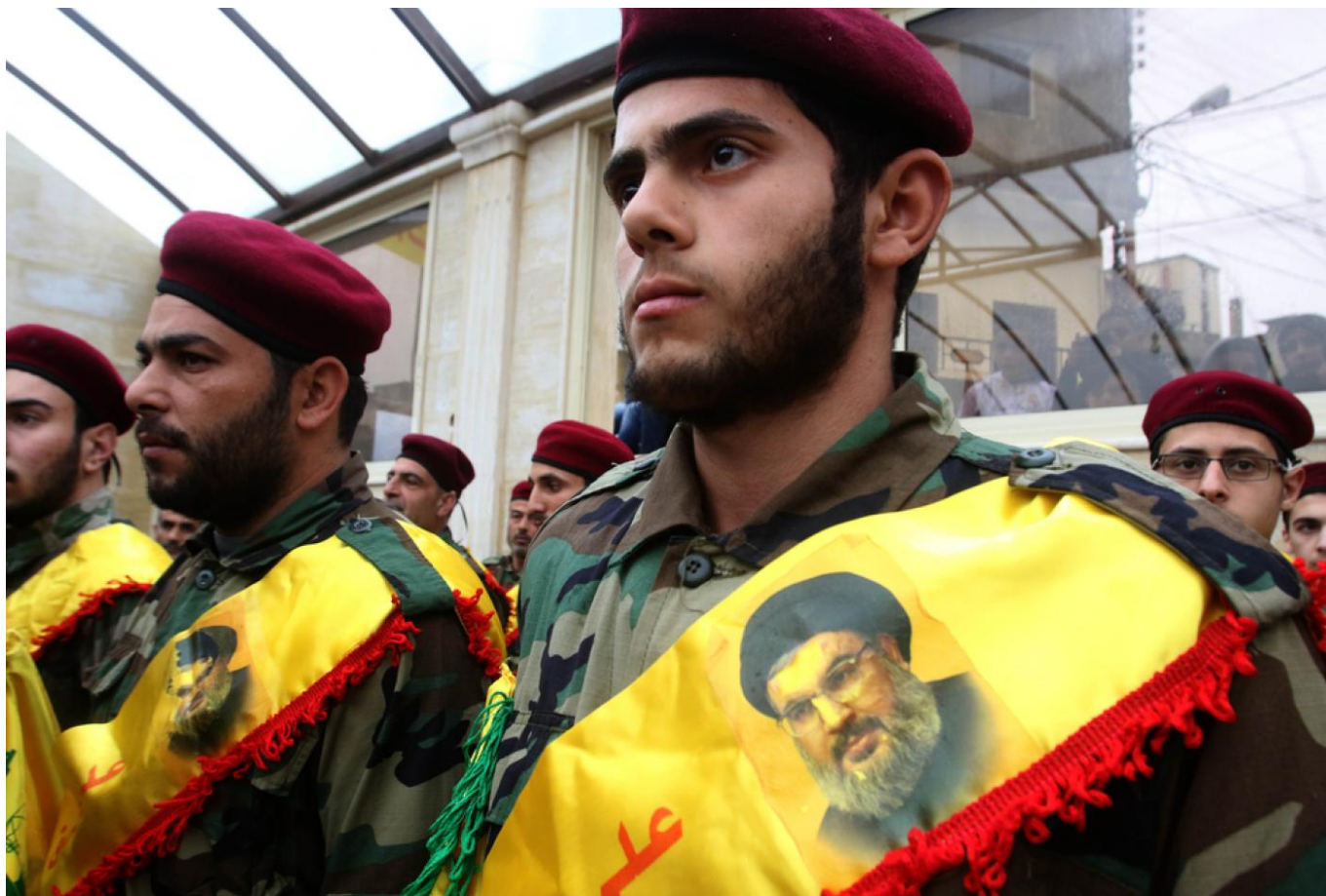
LONDON: The supply of weapons from Iran to Hezbollah undermines Lebanon's national security and poses a threat to the security of the US, President Joe Biden said Tuesday.

The president [served notice to Congress](#) to extend the national emergency with respect to Lebanon, in place since 2007, beyond its termination date of Aug. 1, 2021.

"Certain ongoing activities, such as Iran's continuing arms transfers to Hezbollah – which include increasingly sophisticated weapons systems – serve to undermine Lebanese sovereignty, contribute to political and economic instability in the region," Biden's message to the Federal Register said.

The Iranian supply of weapons to Hezbollah continued to "constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States," he added.

"For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13441 with respect to Lebanon."



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## [UK's Boris Johnson, Egypt's El-Sisi discuss need for Renaissance Dam negotiations](#)

Tue, 2021-07-20 21:20

LONDON: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi discussed the ongoing Renaissance Dam issue with British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Tuesday.

During a telephone call, El-Sisi reiterated Egypt's position of wanting to ensure its water security and upholding its "historic rights of Nile water," while also calling on the international community to continue supporting the negotiation process on the issue, the president's spokesman said.

Johnson gave the Egyptian president assurances of British support for the resumption of negotiations and reaching a fair solution to the crisis.

The two leaders also discussed developments in Palestine and the importance of maintaining the cease-fire between Israel and Palestinian factions, with Johnson praising the role Egypt plays in mediating between the parties, and the need for "serious and constructive negotiations between the two sides," the spokesman's statement said.

The British prime minister also praised Egypt's allocation of \$500 million for reconstruction projects in the Gaza Strip.

El-Sisi and Johnson also talked about the importance of Libya moving forward with its political process with a view to settling its ongoing crisis once and for all, and ending foreign intervention in the country.

They also discussed closer collaboration on climate change, with the upcoming COP26 conference in Glasgow at the end of the year, and the need to support developing countries in obtaining funding, as well as technological and technical support, to tackle the issue.



# Battle for the Nile

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## [Israeli PM backs down over Muslim holy site in Jerusalem](#)

Author:

Tue, 2021-07-20 00:49

JEDDAH: Israel's new prime minister backtracked on Monday after claiming that Jews were entitled to "freedom of worship" at Al-Haram Al-Sharif in Jerusalem, the third-holiest site in Islam.

In fact, the site is administered by Jordan through the Islamic Waqf, and Jews may visit but not pray. Naftali Bennett's office made it clear on Monday that he now accepted the status quo had not changed.

There was outrage among Palestinians on Sunday when more than 1,600 Jewish extremists paraded through the site, and Israeli security forces fired rubber bullets and tear-gas grenades at Muslim worshippers in Al-Aqsa Mosque to clear their path.

The Jewish extremists were marking Tisha B'Av, a day of mourning and repentance to commemorate the destruction of two temples more than 2,000 years ago. Jews believe the hilltop compound is where the temples once stood, and refer to it as the Temple Mount, the holiest site in Judaism.



A Palestinian man argues with Israeli border guards in the flashpoint city of Hebron in the Israeli-occupied West Bank on June 18, 2021. (AFP / MOSAB SHAWER)

Under former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Jewish extremists frequently breached the compound under police protection and provoked clashes with Muslim worshippers.

Political analyst and Arab News columnist Osama Al-Sharif said: “Even though Bennett has backed down for now the reality is that Israel will continue to disregard the status quo agreement and will allow Jewish groups to storm the site.

“At one point there will be a catastrophic incident that will result in another intifada or even a regional war. The world needs to put limits to Israeli violations before such a catastrophe occurs.”



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Israeli soldiers attack Muslims as Jewish extremists break status quo at Al-Aqsa  
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## US 'always there for Jordan,' Biden tells King Abdullah

Author:

Mon, 2021-07-19 23:43

JEDDAH: The US "will always be there for Jordan," President Joe Biden told King Abdullah on Monday as the Jordanian monarch arrived in Washington for an official visit.

Biden called the king a "good, loyal, decent friend."  
"You've always been there, and we will always be there for Jordan," he said. Abdullah said his region has many challenges. "You can always count on me, my country and many of our colleagues in the region," he told Biden.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said talks between the king and the president would be "an opportunity to discuss the many challenges facing the Middle East and showcase Jordan's leadership role in promoting peace and stability in the region."

The two leaders are expected to discuss the conflict in Syria, from where more than 1 million refugees have fled to Jordan, and a difficult security situation in Iraq, a US administration official said. At least eight drone attacks and 17 rocket attacks have targeted the US military presence in Iraq since Biden took office in January.

King Abdullah and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi visited Baghdad in June for talks with Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Kadhimi. The Biden administration sees Jordan as a moderate voice in the region that can help "balance and counter" some of the more malign influence coming from Iran, the administration official said.

The Jordanian king had a difficult relationship with Biden's predecessor, Donald Trump, who he saw as undercutting the prospect of peace between Israelis and Palestinians with his 2017 declaration of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Biden has no plans to reverse US recognition of Jerusalem as the capital.

King Abdullah is the first Arab leader to meet face-to-face with Biden. The president will host Kadhimi at the White House next week, and Biden has invited Israel's new prime minister, Naftali Bennett, to visit later this summer.

King Abdullah is also set to have a working breakfast on Tuesday with Vice President Kamala Harris, and to meet Secretary of State Antony Blinken. Queen



Rania and Crown Prince Hussein are expected to join King Abdullah for the White House visit.

\*With Reuters



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Jordan sentences two sedition plotters to 15 years hard labor

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## [Lebanese president says talks on new PM will begin next Monday](#)

Mon, 2021-07-19 23:28

BEIRUT: Lebanon's President Michel Aoun announced on Monday that parliamentary consultations to choose a new prime minister will begin on July 26.

Lebanon has been run by a caretaker government for nearly a year. Meanwhile

the nation's currency has collapsed, many people have lost their jobs and banks have frozen customers' accounts in what has been described as one of the most severe financial crises the world has seen in modern times.

Saad Hariri, who was chosen as prime minister-designate nine months ago, resigned on Thursday after months of negotiations with Aoun failed to result in the formation of a new government. The previous administration, led by Prime Minister Hassan Diab, resigned amid public anger following the explosion at Beirut's port on Aug. 4 last year.

Since then, the escalating financial collapse has fueled hunger, unrest and fuel shortages as the country struggles with its worst crisis since the civil war that began in 1975. The Central Bank's foreign reserves are rapidly running out and the nation's currency has lost most of its value since 2019, pushing more than half of the population into poverty amid soaring prices.

A delegation from the US Department of Treasury's Terrorist Financing and Financial Crimes office arrived in Beirut on Monday. It will meet "with financial sector interlocutors and civil society groups to engage in discussing issues related to corruption, illicit finance and counterterrorism," according to the US Embassy in Lebanon.



The results of the Syndicate of Engineers elections held in Beirut showed that voters are taking a new path. (File/AFP)

Dana Stroul, the US deputy assistant secretary of defense for the Middle East, warned on Saturday that “the inability of the Lebanese to put food on their tables could lead to violence.”

She also expressed concerns that “the failure to form a government and Hezbollah’s ongoing attempts, due to the support it receives from Iran, to challenge the Lebanese state” are “keeping Lebanon weak and not providing an alternative to the legitimate government.”

## FASTFACT

**Dana Stroul, US deputy assistant secretary of defense for Middle East, warned that 'the inability of the Lebanese to put food on their tables could lead to violence.'**

She added that "the Pentagon is closely monitoring the situation and encouraging Lebanon's leaders to take prompt steps to prevent the outbreak of this type of violence."

Meanwhile the results of Syndicate of Engineers elections in Beirut on Sunday suggested that voters are beginning to take matters into their own hands. The opposition Syndicate Revolts coalition, which formed during the Oct. 17, 2019 revolution, achieved a resounding victory over the ruling parties that is unprecedented in the history of syndicate elections in Lebanon.

Activist Ralph Germany, from the opposition Tahalof Watani (My Nation's coalition), told Arab News: "The people, including engineers, are angry at the parties in power. Usually the educated class in any society is the one that holds its parties accountable; this is what civilized peoples do.

"Through their votes the engineers wanted to tell the parties in power that the people are not sheep."

The opposition alliance won about two-thirds of the votes in what is being seen as a referendum on the extent to which the revolution groups are united in opposition to the ruling authority.

A total of 8,727 people voted in the poll out of more than 46,000 registered syndicate engineers, many of whom work outside of Lebanon. Aref Yassin of the Syndicate Revolts coalition won 5,798 votes to become head of the syndicate, succeeding Jad Thabet.

Yassin defeated the candidate backed by the Future Movement and Amal Movement, Bassem Al-Oueini, and the candidate backed by other ruling parties, Abdo Sukaria, by a margin of about four to one.

The ruling parties had tried to disrupt the election by spreading rumors designed to smear the opposition candidate and discourage voting.

"The parties in power fought dirty to stay in charge," said Germany. "These parties were benefiting from the syndicate by making certain deals, especially since (the syndicate) has a say in urban planning, the fate of marine property, and granting licenses.

"When the ruling parties were in charge, every decision served their own interests."



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Dozens injured in Lebanon as protests turn violent amid rising tensions