

# Houthis should cast aside pride, enter peace talks: Top US general

Author:

Mon, 2021-06-07 21:11

LONDON: The top US military official in the Middle East has urged the Iran-backed Houthis to cast aside their pride and desire for a military solution in Yemen, and instead enter political negotiations with the internationally recognized government and Saudi-led coalition to end the country's crisis.

In a press briefing attended by Arab News, Gen. Kenneth McKenzie Jr., commander of the US Central Command, said it is clear that the Houthis are holding up the peace process in Yemen and thereby prolonging the suffering of millions of people.

"We're at a point in the crisis in Yemen where I'm personally convinced that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia seeks a responsible political end to the conflict. I'm convinced they're willing to take significant steps to make that happen," he told Arab News. "Unfortunately, I don't believe the Houthis are ready to seize the moment."

Earlier this year, Saudi Arabia launched a wide-ranging initiative to bring peace to Yemen, deliver aid to its people and end the country's six-year war.

The plan called for a nationwide ceasefire supervised by the UN, the reopening of Sanaa airport, and new talks to reach a political resolution to the conflict.

However, McKenzie said he believes the Houthis are unwilling to entertain the possibility of a political solution.

They "have an opportunity here to enter good-faith negotiations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to bring an end to this conflict," he added.

"But their constant bombardment of Saudi Arabia isn't helpful, and their continued pressure to take the town of Marib in northwest Yemen isn't helpful either."

Marib hosts many internally displaced Yemenis, and just days ago dozens of people – including a 5-year-old and a 10-year-old – were killed by a Houthi airstrike on a gas station there.

"I hope (the Houthis') pride and their desire to seek a purely military solution to this conflict isn't going to overcome the opportunity that we now have in front of us," McKenzie said.

One of Washington's priorities, he added, is "deterring Iran's destabilizing activities" because Tehran "remains the biggest threat to stability in the Middle East."

A key focus of that effort is taking place in Iraq, where Tehran is going to increasing lengths to undermine the country's sovereignty.

Much like the Houthis, McKenzie said Iran's Iraq-based proxies are increasingly dismissive of political engagement, and are instead choosing to pursue their objectives with violence.

"The latest manifestation of that has been the use of small unmanned aerial systems, or drones. Some of them are very small, some are larger, but all can be very lethal," he added. "Political pressure hasn't worked for them. Now they're turning to a kinetic approach."



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Houthis](#)

[US general](#)

[Yemen](#)

US condemns Houthis for truce failure, Marib offensive  
Human Rights Watch says Houthis blocking COVID-19 vaccines

---

[\*\*Vote on new Israeli government to be\*\*](#)

# held in coming week

Author:

AP

ID:

1623082605845732700

Mon, 2021-06-07 15:22

JERUSALEM: Israel's parliament speaker said Monday that a vote to approve a new government that would end Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's 12-year rule will be held in the coming week, without setting a precise date.

The announcement by Yariv Levin, a close Netanyahu ally, leaves time for the prime minister's efforts to try to peel away supporters from the fragile coalition arrayed against him, which consists of eight parties and has only a narrow majority in Israel's 120-member Knesset, or parliament.

Netanyahu's supporters have launched a blistering campaign against his opponents, including death threats and raucous protests outside their homes that has forced the Knesset to beef up their security details.

Netanyahu has accused his erstwhile right-wing allies of betrayal for allying with leftists and a small Arab party that he had also courted.

The so-called change coalition appears to be holding together despite the attacks and its ideological differences.

Naftali Bennett, an ultranationalist former Netanyahu ally, would serve as prime minister for two years, followed by the centrist Yair Lapid.

"This government is being formed because it's the majority," Lapid said Monday, insisting that it would serve all Israelis and be based on "trust, on decency, on goodwill."

"These past few days proved how much we need change. If the leadership uses violence and incitement against Knesset members, against their children, against the very essence of the democratic process, then we need change," Lapid said.

Israel held four elections in less than two years, the most recent in March. Each time, voters were deeply polarized over whether Netanyahu should remain in office while on trial for corruption. An emergency government formed last year to address the coronavirus pandemic was mired in political infighting and collapsed in December. Netanyahu tried and failed to form a government after the March elections before the mandate was given to Lapid.

The political transition, which could yet be derailed, comes amid heightened tensions following weeks of clashes between Palestinian protesters and Israeli police in Jerusalem that ignited a wave of ethnic violence in Israeli cities and triggered an 11-day Gaza war.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Israel](#)

[Benjamin Netanyahu](#)

[Naftali Bennett](#)

[Yair Lapid](#)

Bennett, Israel's right-wing leader tipped to be prime minister  
Netanyahu's grip on power loosens as far-right leader Bennett backs rival coalition

---

## [Jordanian parliament expels MP Osama Al-Ajarmeh for inciting riots](#)

Author:

Sun, 2021-06-06 22:22

AMMAN: Jordanian MPs voted on Sunday to expel Osama Al-Ajarmeh from parliament after he was accused of sparking riots over the weekend.

The emergency session was held after violence erupted in the suburb of Naour, a stronghold of the Ajarmeh tribe in southwest Amman.

Four police officers were wounded in clashes with supporters of the dismissed MP, the Public Security Department (PSD) said.

Of the 130-member lower chamber, 108 MPs voted in favor of expelling Al-Ajarmeh.

The MP was seen in a video insulting King Abdullah II while carrying a sword and a gun in a shoulder holster.

The injured police officers were taken to hospital after being hit by stones, the PSD said.

During Sunday's session, the house speaker, Abdulmunim Oddat, and several other MPs denounced Al-Ajarmeh's "perverted utterances" and "devious, slanderous" allegations aimed at the king.

"I hereby declare the parliament's support to the king against all attempts targeting his prestige, and rejects any tampering with the kingdom's social fabric, its tribal and family harmony, and social peace, which form the basis for Jordan's security and stability," the Jordan news agency, Petra, reported Oddat as saying.

Last week, MPs voted to freeze Al-Ajarmeh's membership of parliament for a year after he was caught on video cursing the chamber during an emergency session to discuss nationwide power outages.

The outspoken MP had accused the the government of deliberately plunging the country into darkness to prevent a march on Amman organized by Jordan's tribes seeking to have the Israeli ambassador expelled for the recent bombing campaign in Gaza.

With his membership frozen, Al-Ajarmeh submitted a resignation letter to the house in which he expressed dismay over the constitutional provision that gives the king the power to dissolve parliament.

Al-Ajarmeh was then seen in many videos making bold statements while surrounded by his supporters, threatening to establish a "radical Jordanian right wing" of tribes and ex-army figures to "purify Amman of the liberal elite" whom he accused of being behind the country's woes.

The government said on Sunday it would not tolerate any acts threatening the country's stability and security, adding that no one is above the law.

A security source told Arab News that the security agencies were dealing with renewed rioting in suburban Naour involving protests over Al-Ajarmeh's dismissal.





Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Jordan](#)

[King Abdullah II](#)

[Osama Al-Ajarmeh](#)

Jordanian security personnel injured in clashes with tribal supporters of MP  
Jordan refers 2 former officials to security court over 'sedition'

---

## [Ever Given: Suez authority cites navigation rules in legal dispute](#)

Author:

Sun, 2021-06-06 22:29

CAIRO: The Suez Canal Authority (SCA) has issued a statement on the accountability and ownership dispute surrounding the Ever Given container ship, which ran aground and disrupted global trade in March.

The statement came in response to recent legal claims put forward by UK Protection Ltd.

According to the release, the SCA stated that its negotiating committee had reviewed negotiations of the legal file for the ship, as well as a statement by UK Protection Ltd.

The SCA said it “appreciated” what was stated about the authority’s eligibility to obtain an appropriate and fair compensation that covers the costs of rescue work, the due rescue reward and the losses incurred by the authority during the successful rescue operation of the stranded ship.

It stressed that the canal’s navigation regulation is the legal reference that defines the rights and obligations of the Suez Canal toward its customers.

The regulation includes traffic rules in the canal and all texts specifying the various responsibilities and requirements for ships transiting the canal, including maritime, logistics and rescue vessels.

It was also highlighted that the Navigation Regulations in Clause No. 58 regarding the designation of accompanying tugs states that the authority shall appoint two tugs accompanying container ships weighing 170,000 tons or more. This was done by the authority in the case of Ever Given, the SCA said.

The authority added that the permitted speeds of vessels within the navigational course ranges from 14 to 16 kilometers per hour, depending on the type of ship.

Accordingly, it said ships are obligated to apply the predetermined speeds in accordance with the navigation regulations during their transit through the channel, and the responsibility for exceeding these speeds rests with the ship’s master alone.



Main category:  
[Middle-East](#)



Tags:

[Ever Given](#)

[MV Ever Given](#)

Suez Canal Authority showing 'full flexibility' in Ever Given compensation talks  
Egyptian court adjourns Suez Canal ship-block case for further compensation talks

---

## [US secretary of state, Palestinian Americans discuss 'important issues'](#)

Author:

Sun, 2021-06-06 22:14

PHILADELPHIA: US secretary of State Anthony Blinken has met a select group of Palestinian American leaders – signifying the importance of changes in the Democratic Party in recent months.

In the past, Arab Americans and especially Palestinian Americans were shunned while US officials regularly met Jewish American leaders.

Blinken tweeted on June 5 about the importance of the conversation with Palestinian-American leaders regarding violence in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza.

“We are committed to rebuilding our relationship with the Palestinian people. Israelis and Palestinians deserve equal measures of security, freedom, opportunity and dignity,” he said on his official Twitter account.

Palestinian Americans who participated told Arab News that the meeting was serious and tackled some of the key issues that need to be talked about.

“We spoke about the importance of conditionality of any aid to Israel and our total opposition to rewarding Israel with the \$735 million military aid package,” said the participant, who asked not to be identified.

The meeting follows promises by President Joe Biden’s administration, repeated in Ramallah recently during Blinken’s meeting with President Mahmoud Abbas, on the need to reopen the US consulate in East Jerusalem and the Palestinian mission to the US.

Complicated legal and legislative laws have hampered the quick reopening of the Palestinian mission to the US.

No names were officially announced and neither was the meeting made public, but Palestinian sources in the US told Arab News that the gathering included a number of well-known political, social and financial leaders.

A source named the following as having participated: Leading Palestinian American nationalist Hanna Hanania; Maysoon Zaideh, a respected comedian and advocate of disability rights; lawyer George Salem; president of the Arab American Institute James Zogby; lawyer and businesswoman Samar Ali; Daniel Harb, president of the American Federation of Ramallah; Taleb Salhab, senior non-profit executive leader; and Ghada Najjar, a Palestinian American academic.

While the list of Palestinian Americans represents traditional and some new leadership, it appears to have avoided extremists and some of the current grassroots leaders who have been igniting demonstrations throughout the US.

A statement signed by more than 500 Palestinian Americans opposed the meeting, considering the closed-door gathering an attempt to circumvent grassroots leaders and to divide the Palestinian American community.

“We call on fellow Palestinians, join us in denouncing Secretary Blinken’s opportunistic meeting with ‘Palestinian community leaders.’ We reject any attempt to undermine the grassroots uprising in Palestine or to divide the powerful coalitions in the US calling for Israel to be held accountable.”



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[US Secretary of State Antony Blinken](#)

Senior global figures slam ‘obstruction’ of ICC Palestine probe  
Israel arrests Jerusalem activist Muna El-Kurd