

Pentagon official warns of Hezbollah threat to Lebanon's stability amid financial crisis

Author:

Tue, 2021-06-01 19:56

LONDON: US military officials warned on Tuesday of the threat posed by Hezbollah to Lebanon's stability amid the economic crisis wracking the country.

The concerns were raised in a discussion on Washington's defense cooperation with Lebanon.

The US has provided support for more than 15 years to the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), but the increasing influence of the terrorist-designated Hezbollah in Lebanese politics has strained the partnership.

"Hezbollah's terrorist and illicit activities threaten Lebanon's security, stability, and sovereignty," Dana Stroul, deputy assistant secretary of defense for the Middle East, told a conference hosted by the Middle East Institute. "It (Hezbollah) is more concerned with its own interests than what is best for the Lebanese people."

The financial and political crisis in Lebanon has seen the value of the local currency plunge, wiping out people's savings and salaries.

The panel heard how the crash has placed increasing pressure on members of the LAF, who are now struggling to make ends meet.

"The administration remains keenly interested in Lebanon's stability, and as a result we are committed to working with the LAF to find ways to bolster them in this time of crisis," Stroul added.



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[Dana Stroul](#)

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US Treasury Targets Hezbollah finance official and shadow bankers in Lebanon
Explained: How Hezbollah built a drug empire via its 'narcoterrorist strategy'

[Human Rights Watch says Houthis blocking COVID-19 vaccines](#)

Author:

AFP

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Tue, 2021-06-01 18:20

DUBAI: Yemen's Houthi militia, who control most of the country's north

including the capital Sanaa, have been blocking international efforts to supply COVID-19 vaccines, Human Rights Watch said on Tuesday.

The New York-based group accused Houthi leaders of suppressing information about both the dangers of COVID-19 and the prevalence of the disease in territory under their control.

"The deliberate decision of the Houthi militias to keep the real number of cases of COVID-19 under wraps and their opposition to vaccines are putting Yemeni lives at risk," said HRW's deputy Middle East director Michael Page. "Pretending COVID-19 does not exist is not a mitigation strategy and will only lead to mass suffering.

"Given the weakened health care system in Yemen, Houthi militia should at least ensure transparency so that civilians living in their areas can understand the scale of the pandemic and facilitate an international vaccination plan that meets the needs on the ground."

Yemen received 360,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine on March 31, the first of 1.9 million doses to be delivered this year through the Covax program for poorer countries.

However, the militias' failure to cooperate with the World Health Organization and the Yemeni government has prevented any vaccines from reaching the north, HRW said citing a medical source with "direct knowledge of the circumstances."

As a result, vaccinations have only been occurring in the government-held south.

HRW quoted Houthi officials as dismissing COVID-19 as a "conspiracy."

"America bears the primary responsibility for the COVID-19 epidemic," it quoted militia leader Abdul Malik Al-Houthi, as saying in a televised speech last year.

Since March 2015, the militia has been fighting an Arab coalition which intervened in support of the government as it teetered on the brink of defeat.

The conflict has claimed tens of thousands of lives and created what the United Nations describes as the world's worst humanitarian crisis.



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HRW slams Iran's 'undeserved' nomination to UN women's committee
Yemeni minister warns of continued Houthi attacks in Red Sea, escalation of African migrant recruits

[**Egypt rejects Ethiopian statement to build more than 100 dams across the country**](#)

Author:

Mon, 2021-05-31 22:32

AMMAN: Egypt has rejected Ethiopia's intention to build a number of dams in

different regions of the country, the foreign ministry said on Monday. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed announced on Sunday that Ethiopia plans to build more than 100 dams in the upcoming fiscal year.

Ahmed Hafez, foreign ministry spokesman, said Ahmed's statement once again reveals Ethiopia's ill faith and its treatment of the Nile and other international rivers that it shares with neighboring countries "as if they were internal rivers subject to their sovereignty and harnessed to serve their interests."

Hafez added that Egypt has always recognized the right of all Nile Basin countries to establish water projects and exploit the resources of the longest river in Africa, in order to achieve development.

"However, these water projects and facilities must be established after coordination, consultation and agreement with the countries that may be affected by them, in the forefront of which are the downstream countries," Hafez said in a statement.

He also said Abiy's comments "are nothing but a continuation of the unfortunate Ethiopian approach that disregards the applicable rules of international law that regulate the use of international rivers, which imposes on Ethiopia to respect the rights of other countries bordering these rivers and not to harm their interests."

Egypt and Ethiopia have been at loggerheads over an Ethiopian dam project on the main tributary to the Nile.

Talks stalled in April over an agreement to govern how much water is released downstream.

Sudan, which also opposes the dam, held joint military exercises with Egypt in recent days as a show of strength as tensions escalate with Ethiopia.



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Egyptian, Djiboutian presidents hold talks over ongoing water dispute with Ethiopia
Ethiopian dam is 'existential issue' for Egypt, El-Sisi tells US diplomat

Dubai to remove all public transport carbon emissions by 2050

Author:

Mon, 2021-05-31 21:21

DUBAI: Dubai will have zero carbon emissions from public transport by 2050, according to a plan published on Monday.

The emirate's Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) said it aims for all buses and taxis to be electric or powered by hydrogen.

Nasir Bu Shehab, CEO of the RTA's Strategy and Corporate Governance Sector, said the authority is planning for a sustainable and environmentally-friendly public transport system.

"Such a drive contributes to curbing climate change and supports the long-term national initiative," he said.

The plan also aims to support the UAE's commitment to the Paris Agreement on climate change to reduce emissions in the country by 23.5 percent by 2030.

Bu Shehab said the roadmap includes expanding the use of electric and hydrogen vehicles within the fleet of public transport buses, school buses, taxis and limousines, to reach "100 percent by 2050"

The authority will also increase the use of clean energy, such as solar power, in the authority's buildings and facilities.

The RTA plans to complete an energy-efficient smart road lighting project by 2035.

The roadmap estimates to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 8 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent and will save around 3 billion dirhams by 2050.



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Dubai's Majid Al Futtaim to break ground on Mall of Saudi in Q4
Dubai forms urban planning committee for grand masterplan

[Egypt considers proposal to set up cultural entertainment city in New Administrative Capital](#)

Author:

Mon, 2021-05-31 21:03

CAIRO: In a meeting with investors, Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly

discussed the proposal to set up an integrated entertainment and cultural city in the New Administrative Capital.

Madbouly called for various aspects of the project to be examined, including the funding assigned to it, as it would carry a significant cost.

After becoming an investment zone, the New Administrative Capital has proven to have a number of advantages, including promising opportunities to attract investment in various domains, Madbouly said.

During the meeting, the investors presented a report on the project, which aims to be a modern tourist destination rivaling others in the region and attracting visitors seeking culture, arts and entertainment.

They discussed the need for a strategic plan to organize artistic events that would host local, regional and international celebrities.

The investors also considered the possibility of forming partnerships with cities and international entertainment centers to create an environment that would attract investment and support the arts.

The proposed vision would also include the establishment of a number of open and closed cultural and entertainment parks, perhaps in cooperation with international amusement park companies.



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Egypt will mark move to New Administrative Capital with 'mass celebration'Egypt to trial New Administrative Capital next year