

Egypt arrests 23 for Sunday's train accident

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Wed, 2021-04-21 20:06

CAIRO: Hamada Al-Sawy, Egypt's public prosecutor, has ordered the arrest of 23 defendants involved in Sunday's train accident in Toukh, which killed 23 people and injured 139.

Those arrested include the train conductor, his assistant, the supervisor of the railway maintenance in the area where the accident occurred, the general director of track renovations, the general director of maintenance, mechanical engineers, and a group of workers and technicians specialized in the maintenance of train vehicles.

Al-Sawy also ordered the arrest of the director of the railway engineering department in the area of the accident, as well as another engineer. They face charges of negligence and failure to observe laws and regulations while performing their jobs.

The public prosecution observed negligence in the maintenance of the trains, as well as forgery in official documents. It questioned 29 Egyptian Railway Authority officials, heard the testimony of 104 of those injured in the accident and authorized the burial of the identified bodies.

The public prosecution also formed a technical committee of specialists, including officials from the Armed Forces Engineering Authority, to carry out various inspections in order to determine the cause of the accident, which occurred at 2:05 p.m. in the country's Qalyubia Governate. The committee was tasked with inspecting the train and its safety and security devices, checking the validity of the railway lines at the site of the accident and the devices used in control rooms with light signals and identifying those responsible, directly or indirectly, for the accident.

The Cairo-Mansoura train No. 949 had left Cairo at 1:20 p.m. and was scheduled to arrive in Mansoura at 5 p.m.



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[Egypt Train Accident](#)

Egypt targets investments of \$80 billion
Ramadan helps Egyptian women bakers make ends meet

[UK admits no assessment made for impact of Yemen aid cut](#)

Author:

Wed, 2021-04-21 19:38

LONDON: The UK government has admitted that it has not carried out an impact assessment for its 60 percent cut in aid to Yemen.

“We haven’t done an impact assessment,” Chris Bold, development director for Yemen at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), told the House of Commons international development committee.

The UN has categorized Yemen as having the world’s worst humanitarian crisis,

and British MPs are challenging the FCDO over what effect its cuts will have.

Ahead of the reduction in funding, James Cleverly, the UK's minister for the Middle East and North Africa, said Yemen is enduring a "terrible" and "heartbreaking" situation.

"The risk of famine is significant," he said, adding that Yemen is experiencing a spike in COVID-19 cases. "Infection numbers look as though they are doubling since the beginning of the year."

The FCDO is focusing most of its reduced funding on feeding people in Yemen, Cleverly said, while also looking at diplomatic efforts to end the conflict.

Addressing the committee, representatives from aid organizations gave assessments on the impact of the cuts.

Save the Children's Deputy Yemen Director Gillian Moyes said its cash-transfer program is expected to be closed by June.

The initiative, she added, had seen the number of families receiving acceptable food rise from 46 percent to 93 percent.

"We are having to assume the program will end, and we are preparing for that," Moyes said. "Our conclusion is that these kinds of gains can be lost."



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UN official rebukes UK over Yemen aid cut Charities: History will 'judge' UK over Yemen aid cuts

Deals signed during Egyptian PM's Libya visit

Tue, 2021-04-20 18:30

CAIRO: Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly, accompanied by a team of ministers, visited Tripoli on Tuesday to discuss economic and political cooperation with the Libyan Government of National Unity.

It followed instructions from Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, who is planning a visit to Libya.

During Madbouly's visit, several agreements were signed between the two governments, most notably on the establishment of power stations in Libya to strengthen its energy networks.

Libya is considered a natural extension of the Egyptian market, due to the geographical proximity and long history of trade exchange and cooperation between the two countries.

Egyptian companies are awaiting government decisions regarding participation in the reconstruction of Libya, which they hope will produce new opportunities in a renewed market.

According to local sources, Madbouly's visit is focussed on investments in the country, Egyptian labor issues and the reopening of diplomatic missions.

Last month, El-Sisi discussed with the head of the Libyan Presidential Council, Mohamed Al-Menfi, prospects for enhanced cooperation between the two countries.

El-Sisi stressed Egypt's full and absolute support for the new executive authority in Libya in all fields and for its success in holding general elections at the end of the year.

He said Egypt was fully prepared to provide its expertise to the Libyan government to help restore its national institutions, especially security and police forces, to achieve greater stability.

Since the beginning of the Libyan crisis, Egypt has promoted political settlement by hosting the warring factions in key meetings.



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Egypt continues to push for political solution in Libya
Egypt sends medical aid to Libya

[Syria's upcoming presidential election stirs bitterness, disappointment in refugees](#)

Mon, 2021-04-19 20:32

BEIRUT: Syrian refugees in Lebanon have expressed bitterness and disappointment ahead of elections that are expected to keep President Bashar Assad in office.

The Syrian Parliament has set May 26 as the date for the poll.

Assad won in 2014 with more than 88 percent of the Syrian vote. He has not

officially announced his candidacy to run in next month's election.

News that Syria's embassies had opened for voter registration was met with disappointment by refugees in Lebanon, who also expressed their frustration with the international community.

Abu Ahmad Souaiba, speaking on behalf of the Voice of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, said the revolution was launched to "achieve freedom and dignity."

"Our disappointment today is great because of the failure to implement (UN) Security Council resolutions, which call for power transition not the re-election of Bashar Assad one more time," he told Arab News.

Syrian refugees in Lebanon have been distributed in the Bekaa Valley and on the country's northern borders since arriving in Lebanon, with the majority of those who took part in the revolution against Assad concentrated in the Aarsal area.

"There are three segments of Syrians in Lebanon," said Souaiba. "One segment includes families who have been living in Lebanon since before the revolution and those who are not affiliated with the opposition. The second includes the opposition, and these migrated to Lebanon in 2013 and 2014 because of the barrels of death (barrel bombs). The third includes those who are neither with the opposition nor with the regime, and those (people) came to Lebanon because of the economic crisis and are concerned about obtaining their livelihood and the sustenance of their families."

According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the number of registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon decreased to 865,500 by the end of Dec. 2020.

Lebanon called on the UNHCR to suspend new registrations at the beginning of 2015.

About 55,000 have returned to Syria in recent years as part of repatriation efforts by Lebanese General Security and as part of a reconciliation program sponsored by Hezbollah in some Syrian towns.

Rumors are circulating that Hezbollah has set up committees to fill out census forms with the number of Syrian refugees present in certain areas ahead of taking them to voting stations on polling day.

Talk of a Hezbollah census has coincided with information that the Ministry of Interior is waiting for UNHCR data in order to prepare a mechanism for calculating the number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

The ministry has been assigned this task in coordination with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Lebanese General Security and the UNHCR.

Arab News contacted UNHCR spokesperson Lisa Abu Khaled, but she refused to comment and only said there was "currently no refugee census."

Souaiba believed there was no need to recount the refugees because, around

six weeks ago, a census was carried out by NGOs under the supervision of Lebanese military intelligence for refugees in camps and settlements, specifically in the Aarsal area which is open to the land connecting Lebanese and Syrian territories.

He also said there was news from inside Syria of hunger, even in Damascus, and painted a bleak picture of people's desperation to escape.

"There is no fuel and no electricity," he added. "A woman who fled to Lebanon with her children told me that her husband was arrested by Syrian authorities and his fate is still unknown. She is almost dying of starvation with her children. She preferred to flee to Lebanon with her children and borrowed \$100 to pay the smuggler. She thought that in Lebanon she would receive some food, and this is better than hunger in Syria."

A UNHCR study estimated that 89 percent of Syrian refugee families were living below the extreme poverty line in Lebanon in 2020, compared to 55 percent in 2019.



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GCC slams Syrian elections as 'farce' Four Syrian refugees die of cold in Lebanon mountains

[Iran, IAEA start talks on unexplained uranium traces](#)

Author:

Mon, 2021-04-19 20:35

VIENNA: The UN nuclear watchdog and Iran on Monday started talks aimed at obtaining explanations from Tehran on the origin of uranium traces at found at undeclared locations in Iran, an issue which could affect efforts to revive Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal.

An agreement to hold the talks helped persuade European powers to hold off of seeking a resolution criticizing Iran at a meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency's 35-nation Board of Governors last month.

That avoided an escalation between Iran and the West that could have hurt efforts to bring Washington and Tehran back into full compliance with the 2015 deal, under which Iran agreed to curbs to its nuclear program in return for the lifting of sanctions.

Failure to make progress on explaining the uranium traces in the IAEA's talks with Tehran could mean France, Britain and Germany would push for a resolution with US backing by the next IAEA board meeting in June.

"The IAEA and Iran began today to engage in a focused process aimed at clarifying outstanding safeguards issues," the IAEA said in a statement, adding that the meeting was at the level of experts.

The Iran nuclear deal effectively drew a line under what the IAEA and US intelligence agencies believe was a secret, coordinated nuclear weapons program that Iran halted in 2003. Iran denies ever seeking nuclear weapons. In the past two years, however, IAEA inspectors have found traces of processed uranium at three sites Iran never declared to the watchdog, suggesting that Tehran had nuclear material connected to old activities that remains unaccounted for.

The IAEA must track that material down to be sure Iran is not diverting any to make nuclear weapons.

The issue has been a complicating factor in the diplomatic effort to resurrect the 2015 deal, which then-US President Donald Trump abandoned in 2018 prompting Iran to violate some of its limits. President Joe Biden aims to resurrect the deal, but Washington and Tehran are at odds over how to do that.

A first IAEA-Iran meeting to discuss the uranium traces had been due to take place in Tehran in early April, but that was delayed just as talks to rescue the deal, involving its remaining parties and shuttle diplomacy with the United States, were being arranged in Vienna.

“Today’s meeting took place in Vienna, as participating Iranian experts are also involved in separate meetings on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action at another location in the Austrian capital,” the IAEA said, using the deal’s full name.



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Russia says Iran nuclear talks enter 'drafting stage'
Deputy commander of Iran's Quds Force dies from 'heart condition'