

Egypt and South Sudan action group to study agricultural cooperation

Author:

Tue, 2020-12-01 01:16

CAIRO: Egypt and South Sudan have agreed to form an action group to study ways for agricultural cooperation to be implemented.

The action group will also study bilateral cooperation in the fields of capacity building, technical assistance in research studies, seed production, agricultural extension, agricultural cooperatives, and value chains.

Egyptian Minister of Agriculture El-Sayed El-Quseir met his South Sudanese counterpart Josephine Lagu, who is visiting Egypt as part of enhancing bilateral cooperation.

El-Quseir said that both sides had agreed to establish three Egyptian joint farms in South Sudan including a fishery and animal husbandry.

He said that both sides were to draft agreements to be jointly adopted and signed to enter into force.

The minister underlined the importance of this visit, which coincided with President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi's trip to South Sudan to meet President Salva Kiir.

El-Quseir said that such a visit reflected the depth of relations between the two countries.

Lagu thanked the Egyptian government and agriculture minister for her visit, which was aimed at enhancing bilateral relations in agriculture and added value chains to boost and develop the economy. She added that such cooperation also covered technology transfer, learning from Egyptian expertise, establishing fisheries and animal husbandries, in addition to developing animal production which would lead to South Sudan achieving food security.

FASTFACT

Both sides agreed to establish three Egyptian joint farms in South Sudan and to draft agreements to be jointly adopted and signed to enter into force.

She said that after returning to Juba she would be expecting Egyptian experts to take on the operating procedures needed to activate bilateral cooperation on the ground.

El-Sisi met Kiir to discuss regional and international issues of mutual concern, especially developments in the strategic areas of the Horn of Africa and West Africa.

Both presidents also discussed ways of containing the potential repercussions of such developments on the region.

El-Sisi said that his country's vision was based on the Nile River being a source of cooperation and development for all people of the Nile Basin countries.

He reiterated that his country would remain a faithful supporter of the South Sudanese people.

“We are committed to giving all forms of support through the existing mechanisms between the two countries,” he said at a press conference after his talks with Kiir.

“I call on the international community to fulfil its pledges and commitments to South Sudan in its path toward a better future. We support efforts to lift international sanctions on South Sudan so as to support the current political transitional process.”

El-Sisi hailed efforts by South Sudan’s political powers to press ahead with implementing the benefits of the transitional period in line with the articles of the activated peace agreement, and to support the efforts of the National Unity Government in drafting a new constitution that would achieve the aspirations of the South Sudanese toward peace, stability, and development.

“We also agreed to further enhance cooperation in the fields of transferring Egyptian expertise, providing technical assistance, and capacity building of national calibers in the brotherly country of South Sudan. This would be achieved by resuming the training programs provided by the Egyptian Agency of Partnership for Development in fields such as education, health, agriculture and irrigation, as well as other civil and military fields.”



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Egypt pledges full support to Palestinian cause
Egypt finance minister says expects disbursement of \$1.6bn of IMF funding by December-end

Egypt pledges full support to Palestinian cause

Author:

Tue, 2020-12-01 01:01

CAIRO: Egypt on Monday pledged its continued full support for the Palestinian issue during a visit to Cairo by the state's President Mahmoud Abbas.

During a meeting, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi said the Palestinian cause remained a key political priority for Egypt and that the country would back Palestine in whatever demands it made toward a peaceful settlement and the restoration of the legitimate rights of its people.

El-Sisi added that solidarity and an intensification of Arab efforts to revive the peace process were needed now.

Also present at the talks between the two presidents was Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sameh Shoukry, Director of Egypt's General Intelligence Service Abbas Kamel, and Palestinian Ambassador to Egypt Diab Al-Louh.

Bassam Rady, official spokesman for the Egyptian Presidency, said that the summit dealt with the latest developments in relation to the Palestinian issue and the peace process in the Middle East.

Abbas noted the importance of maintaining regular consultation and coordination with the Egyptian president on the overall Palestinian situation and thanked Egypt for its long-standing support for Palestinian national unity.

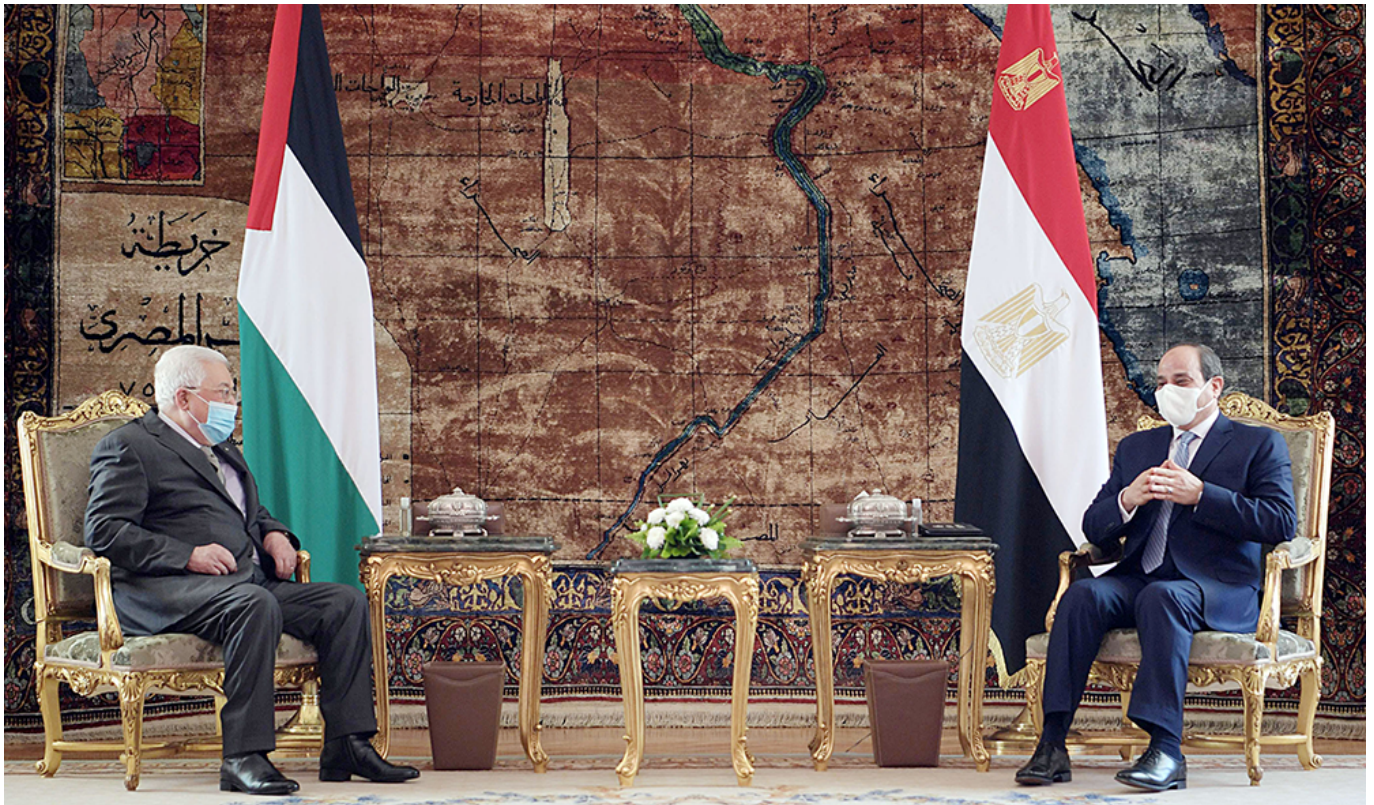
The meeting also reviewed ongoing Egyptian efforts to bring stability to the Gaza Strip and help improve humanitarian, living, and economic conditions there, while pushing the reconciliation process with a view to achieving political consensus.

As part of his first foreign tour since the beginning of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, Abbas was also due to meet with Jordanian King Abdullah II. His trip comes days after the Palestinian Authority (PA) announced the restoration of security coordination with the Israelis.

Sources said that Abbas wanted to coordinate Arab positions and rally support for a new unified political process in the region before the US President-elect Joe Biden came into power, adding that the PA had already been in contact with the incoming American president's team.

Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad Al-Maliki said that the PA had indirectly informed Biden's administration of its readiness to return to negotiations with Israel on the basis of international law decisions.

Earlier, Israeli reports said that Abbas had sent several messages to Biden's team declaring his willingness to abide by conditions that would allow the opening of a dialogue between him and the new administration in Washington.



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Egypt's El-Sisi warns of instability after protest calls Palestine's Mahmoud Abbas asks UN for international peace conference next year

[Schools in Lebanon reopen, other sectors gradually](#)

Author:

Mon, 2020-11-30 01:05

BEIRUT: The Ministry of Education will reopen schools for integrated education starting on Monday.

This comes after two weeks of closure and amid objections from civil bodies and commentators working in the public field.

Hilda El-Khoury, director of the counseling and guidance department at the Ministry of Education, said: "Returning to education through the combined method will be within the preventive measures that were previously approved."

However, the Civil Emergency Authority in Lebanon said: "The decision will lead to a health crisis affecting the most vulnerable people, namely children and underage students, especially with the number of cases not declining since before the closure, and with the noticeable increase in the daily number of deaths."

The Ministerial Committee for Combating the Coronavirus has meanwhile maintained its decision to impose a partial curfew in Lebanon but amended its implementation hours. Instead of starting at 5:00 p.m. each evening, the curfew now begins at 11 p.m. and ends at 5 a.m., provided that restaurants, cafes and malls close at 10:00 pm.

During its meeting on Sunday, the committee decided to restore vehicle movement on roads but maintained the suspension of social activities, cinemas and nightclubs.

Health minister for Lebanon's caretaker government, Hamad Hassan, said that the adoption of the strategy, permitting odd/even license plate vehicles on the roads on alternate days, had doubled the number of COVID-19 cases due to people's reliance on shared transportation.

He said: "The rate of commitment to complete closure in all Lebanese territories has reached 70 percent over the past two weeks."

Hassan said that the aim of the measures was to alleviate the pressure on the medical and nursing staff.

"The required medical measures, completed in terms of expanding the hospitals' capacity to accommodate the COVID-19 cases, have been completed," he said.

The death toll in Lebanon has reached 1,000, while the total number of confirmed cases has jumped to more than 126,000 cases, at a rate of more than 1,200 cases per day during the past two weeks.

Abdul Rahman Al-Bizri, an infectious disease specialist and member of the emergency committee on coronavirus, regretted the lack of plans for the period following the closure due to a lack of coordination on COVID-19 between state departments.

He said that this had kept the country in a state of confusion and chaos while citizens paid a high price in light of the difficult economic and living conditions.

Al-Bizri said: "The repeated closures are unsuccessful, and one of their consequences is the decline in economic activity, the life cycle, and the living conditions."

Meanwhile, video footage of Health Minister Hamad Hassan went viral on

Saturday. It showed him cutting a cake for the birthday of Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah in the open market in Baalbek city.

The video was circulated on social media and caused a scandal following a similar episode in which the same minister was involved months ago.

The people of his town in the Bekaa met him during the peak of the spread of coronavirus, and he danced among them carrying a sword. Some people carried him on their shoulders and other social distancing measures were also not observed.

The Syndicate of Owners of Restaurants, Cafes, Night-Clubs and Pastries has called in the past few days for the sector to reopen to save what is left of it.

In a statement issued on the eve of the ministerial committees' meeting, the syndicate called on the caretaker prime minister, Hassan Diab, to "adopt a health-economic approach for the benefit of the rest of the sector."

The syndicate added: "The sector has fully fulfilled its duties with regard to the preventive measures.

"We have also advanced a new approach related to the capacity of institutions, whereby chairs and tables are reallocated to accommodate only 50 percent of the original capacity, guaranteeing that no overcrowding will occur.

"We insist on adopting this as a new measure, and we discussed it with the minister of interior, and the sector will reopen its doors on Monday morning while remaining committed to all procedures and laws."

Bechara Asmar, the head of the General Labor Union, called for the reopening of the country "because it secures a return to the economic cycle during the month of the holidays, protects workers, employees and daily-paid workers in all private, public, and official sectors, and preserves their livelihood at a time when they risk having their wages reduced, starving to death or dying of the coronavirus."



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Lebanon to ease virus curbs from Monday
Coronavirus threatens festive season in Lebanon

[Iran to give a 'calculated' response to nuclear scientist killing, says official](#)

Mon, 2020-11-30 00:41

DUBAI: Iran will give a "calculated and decisive" response to the killing of its top nuclear scientist, said a top adviser to Iran's supreme leader, while a hard-line newspaper suggested Tehran's revenge should include striking the Israeli city of Haifa.

"Undoubtedly, Iran will give a calculated and decisive answer to the criminals who took Martyr Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh from the Iranian nation," Kamal Kharrazi, who is also head of Iran's Strategic Council on Foreign Relations, said in a statement.

Fakhri-zadeh, long suspected by Western and Israeli government of masterminding a secret nuclear weapons program, was ambushed on a highway

near Tehran on Friday and gunned down in his car.

Iran's clerical and military rulers have blamed the Islamic Republic's longtime enemy, Israel, for the killing. Iran has in the past accused Israel of killing several Iranian nuclear scientists since 2010.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office has declined to comment on the killing. An Israeli Cabinet minister, Tzachi Hanegbi, said on Saturday he did not know who carried it out.

Iranian hard-line media called on Sunday for a tough revenge. The hard-line Kayhan daily, whose editor in chief is appointed by Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, called for an attack on the Israeli port city of Haifa, if an Israeli role in Fakhrizadeh's killing is proven.

HIGHLIGHT

Iranian hard-line media called on Sunday for a tough revenge.

"The attack should be carried out in such a way that in addition to destroying the facilities, it should also cause heavy human casualties," wrote Saadollah Zarei in an opinion piece.

However, Iran's rulers are aware of daunting military and political difficulties of attacking Israel. Such an attack would also complicate any effort by US President-elect Joe Biden to revive detente with Tehran after he takes office on Jan. 20.

Tensions have been high between Tehran and Washington since 2018, when President Donald Trump exited Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with six major powers and reimposed sanctions that have hit Iran's economy hard. In retaliation, Tehran has gradually breached the deal's curbs on its nuclear program.

Biden has said he will return the US to the deal if Iran resumes compliance. Iran has always denied pursuing nuclear weapons.



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Iran to give a 'calculated' response to nuclear scientist killing, says officialUK concerned over Iran situation, awaiting full facts on scientist killing

[UAE condemns killing of Iranian scientist, calls on all parties to exercise self-restraint](#)

Sun, 2020-11-29 23:05

LONDON: The UAE condemned the killing of Iranian scientist Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh and called on all parties to exercise self-restraint on Sunday, Emirates News Agency reported.

"The state of instability our region is currently going through, and the security challenges it faces, drives us all to work toward averting acts that could lead to escalation and eventually threaten the stability of the entire region," the news agency quoted the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation as saying.

“Given the current situation in the region, the UAE calls upon all parties to exercise maximum degrees of self restraint to avoid dragging the region into new levels of instability,” the ministry added.

Mohsen Fakhrizadeh was killed in an ambush near Tehran on Friday.

He has been described by Western and Israeli intelligence services for years as the leader of a covert atomic bomb programme halted in 2003, which Israel and the United States accuse Tehran of trying to restore in secret.



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Turkey condemns Iran scientist killing as ‘terrorism’ UK concerned over Iran situation, awaiting full facts on scientist killing