

# US pressures Assad by slapping new sanctions on Syrian entities and individuals

Author:

Associated Press

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Wed, 2020-09-30 16:28

BEIRUT: The Trump Administration imposed sanctions Wednesday on entities and individuals in Syria as part of Washington's pressure campaign against President Bashar Assad and his inner circle.

The sanctions came a day after intense clashes in southern Syria broke out between Russia-backed Syrian troops and local fighters who belong to the minority Druze sect, killing and wounding dozens. The sanctions were not related to the fighting in southern Syria.

The Treasury Department and State Department sanctions are the result of legislation known as the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act, named after the pseudonym of a Syrian policeman who turned over photographs of thousands of victims of torture by the Assad government.

Among those sanctioned Wednesday was the Syrian army's Russian-backed 5th Corps that was established during the country's conflict that started in March 2011. The 5th Corps includes rebels who later paid allegiance to Assad's government.

The State Department said it is sanctioning 5th Corps commander Maj. Gen. Milad Jedid "for his involvement in the obstruction, disruption, or prevention of a cease-fire in Syria."

The sanctions also included two sisters of Yasser Ibrahim, who is suspected of obstructing a political solution to the Syrian conflict and using his networks across the Middle East and beyond to cut deals to enrich Assad.

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**READ MORE: Syrians dread impact of Caesar Act sanctions aimed at Assad**

**Caesar Act sends Syria's Bashar Assad a stark reality check**

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"The Ibrahim family, led by Yasser Ibrahim, acts as a front for Bashar Assad and his wife Asma Al-Akhras," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said. The State Department identified the sisters as Nasreen and Rana.

The US began implementing the Caesar Act in June with a raft of economic and travel sanctions for human rights abuses and blocking a settlement of the country's bloody nine-year conflict.

Sanctions imposed earlier this year included Assad and his wife and their eldest son, Hafez, as well as members of the extended Assad family, senior military leaders and business executives. Many of those on the list were

already subject to US sanctions, but the penalties also target non-Syrians who do business with them.

The new wave of sanctions came as opposition activists reported clashes in southern Syria between the 5th Corps and local fighters who belong to the minority Druze sect.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor, said the fighting that broke out Tuesday in Sweida province left 16 Druze fighters and 12 members of the 5th Corps dead. It added that dozens were wounded on both sides.

The Observatory said the situation was relatively calm in the province Wednesday.

The Suwayda 24, an activist collective in Sweida, said a funeral was held Wednesday in the provincial capital, also called Sweida, for 15 fighters killed the day before.

It said the fighting broke out on Tuesday when local fighters attacked the 5th Corps in the nearby village of Qaraya to force them out of agricultural lands they had entered earlier.



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Syrians dread impact of Caesar Act sanctions aimed at Assad  
Caesar Act sends

## [UAE reports 3 COVID-19 deaths, 995 new cases, a jump from previous days](#)

Author:

Tue, 2020-09-29 22:12

DUBAI: The UAE on Tuesday reported three deaths from COVID-19, a slight jump from the previous days, bringing the death toll to 416.

The Ministry of Health and Prevention said 995 new confirmed cases were reported, bringing the total number of infected cases since the pandemic began to 93,095, while the total deaths reached 413.

The ministry also said 1,076 cases recovered from coronavirus over the previous 24 hours, bringing the total to 82,538 cases.

Dubai Health Authority said it launched three new COVID-19 testing centers around the city, increasing the number of centers to five.

DHA launches 3 new [#COVID19](#) testing centres  
[pic.twitter.com/F4Hvi9IYeC](https://pic.twitter.com/F4Hvi9IYeC)

– هيئة الصحة بدبي (@DHA\_Dubai) [September 29, 2020](#)

The centers will operate seven days a week, starting from 11am to 6pm, with a capacity of 550 examinations per day for each center.

The National Emergency Crisis and Disaster Management Authority (NCEMA) said between Sept. 1-15, 24,894 violations were detected in different regions of the UAE, and the most common violation was not wearing face masks, followed by violations regarding the number of passengers permitted per vehicle.

NCEMA said the 81 percent of the violations were made by Asian nationals and 19 percent were made by Arabs, with the highest violations detected in Dubai, followed by Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Ajman, Fujairah, Umm Al-Quwain and finally Ras Al-Khaimah.

NCEMA also announced the return of sporting activities in the country with specific procedures and controls to prevent the spread of the virus.

“Protocols and guidelines have been developed to ensure a safe return to sporting activities based on studies, data and best global practices all under the supervision of medical teams with focal points managed by sport federations,” it said.

Dubai Police arrested two employees at one of the testing centers for allegedly “exploiting their positions” and for accepting bribes to falsify COVID-19 test results.

NCEMA said in a statement that they allegedly used images of negative examination samples previously preserved in the database belonging to other

uninfected persons, in order to be able to enter Abu Dhabi.  
The health ministry approved on Tuesday the provision of the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine to employees working on the front lines at Sharjah International Airport in cooperation with the government of Sharjah, "as they are exposed due to the nature of their work."

Dubai Economy emphasizes on the importance of following the precautionary measures and report any violation through the Dubai Consumer app. [#UAE](#) [#Dubai](#) [#DubaiEconomy](#) [#DubaiDED](#) [#We\\_Are\\_All\\_Responsible](#)

– اقتصادية دبي (@Dubai\_DED) [September 29, 2020](#)

Meanwhile, Dubai Economy said it issued fines to 10 commercial establishments and gave warnings to 11 shops for not adhering to anti-COVID-19 measures, while 643 businesses were found to be compliant. These included shops in a number of shopping centers around Dubai, as well as four gyms that were fined in cooperation with Dubai Sports Council. Elsewhere, Kuwait reported 587 new COVID-19 cases, bringing the total to 104,568, while the death toll reached 607 after two new deaths were registered.

تعلن [#وزارة\\_الصحة](#) عن تأكيد إصابة 587 حالة جديدة، وتسجيل 538 حالة شفاء، و 2 حالة وفاة جديدة بـ [#فيروس\\_كورونا\\_المستجد](#) COVID-19 ، ليصبح إجمالي عدد الحالات 104,568 حالة [pic.twitter.com/nlHnP0W5wM](https://pic.twitter.com/nlHnP0W5wM)

– وزارة الصحة - الكويت (@KUWAIT\_MOH) [September 29, 2020](#)

Oman recorded 528 new COVID-19 cases and 11 deaths, bringing total numbers to 98,585 and 935 respectively.

[#Statement](#) No. 196  
September 29, 2020 [pic.twitter.com/gBvT9vlr20](https://pic.twitter.com/gBvT9vlr20)

– عُمان (@OmaniMOH) [September 29, 2020](#)





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[National Emergency Crisis and Disaster Management Authority \(NCEMA\)](#)

[Ministry of Health and Prevention](#)

UAE announces 626 new COVID-19 cases, a drop from previous day  
UAE confirms 851 new COVID-19 cases, one death

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## [Reimagining the city in the age of COVID-19](#)

Tue, 2020-09-29 22:37

DUBAI: The year 2007 was a momentous one for mankind. That year, according to the United Nations, for the first time in history, more people lived in urban than in rural locations. The concept of the city – which had been inexorably advancing for several thousand years – was finally dominant.

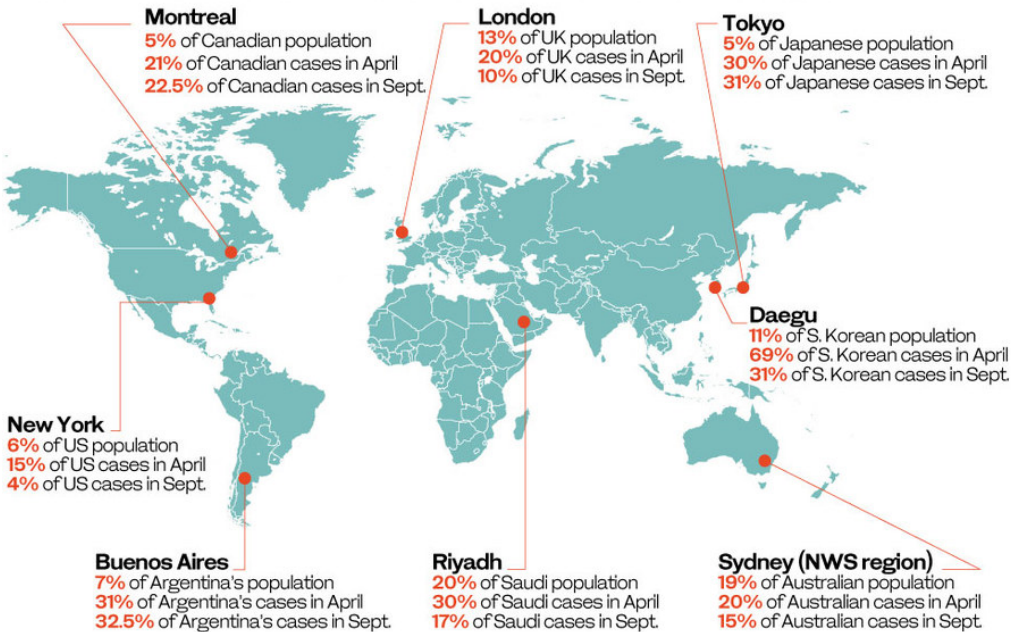
The trend towards urbanization began in the Middle East, so it is fitting that over the next three days the region will again be at the center of strategic thinking about the urban phenomenon as it faces perhaps its most serious challenge ever – the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The first high-density settlements were in Egypt and what became modern-day Iraq. Although they were little more than small towns by today's standards, the attraction gradually spread around the world. Industrialization and the age of technology gave it the final boost. Now most of us are "citizens" – in the original meaning of the word.



# CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC'S URBAN EPICENTER

Impact felt most by cities due to their high density and concentration of economic activities



## Reasons cities are the most impacted



**Rapid urbanization surges** have resulted in cities becoming **densely packed** and being spatially close makes cities most vulnerable

**High concentration of economic activity** in cities (**70% of world GDP** in cities, but less than **2% of land mass**)

Heavy **reliance** and **ridership** on **public transportation** for commuting

Several cities act as **national/regional/global economic and travel hubs**

**Cities are hubs of innovation and economic activity with**

**70%** of contribution to the GDP  
**55%** of the world population

**Urbanization imposes challenges for sustainable development as cities contribute to production of**

**75%** of global CO2 emissions  
**70%** of the world's solid wastes  
**75%** world's total natural resources

ARAB NEWS

Source: National and City government websites; WHO Covid-19 Dashboard; Media reports

People leave the village and move to the city for a variety of reasons. They seek lifestyle enhancement, they want to better themselves materially, they are looking for work, or education or medical care. Maybe they are just looking for company.

Cities have proved to be one of mankind's most successful innovations. Some 70 percent of global gross domestic product is generated in cities, which are recognized as hubs of innovation and technological and scientific progress. The attraction of cities throughout history is that they provide all these things in close proximity.

But they are also the location – some rural dwellers would even say the inspiration – of all the opposites: poverty, crime, discrimination and the modern alienation of “urban loneliness”. Along with all that urban prosperity, cities also produce 75 percent of all global carbon dioxide emissions, around 75 percent of all the refuse and waste products we struggle to dispose of, and, on top of that, they consume 75 percent of the world's natural resources.



A picture taken on March 9, 2016 shows towers under construction at the King Abdullah Financial District in the Saudi capital Riyadh. (AFP/File Photo)

Nothing illustrates the dichotomy better than the age of the pandemic. Cities are the perfect incubator for the disease, as New York or Milan can tragically testify. But they can also be the location of the best healthcare facilities, and a better environment in which to lock down, as Singapore or Seoul bears witness to.

Cities have been at the epicenter of the global outbreak and suffered greater impact due to high density and the concentration of economic activities. Despite cities' overwhelming contribution to global GDP, they account for only 2 percent of the world's land mass.

Rapid urbanization surges have resulted in cities becoming densely packed and in close spatial proximity, making them more vulnerable. They have also acted as vectors for the disease, with heavy reliance on public transport and car ridership, as well as being the hubs for regional, national and international travel.

## Opinion

This section contains relevant reference points, placed in (Opinion field)



Over the next three days, experts – mayors, civic leaders and urban planners among others – from around the world will come together in the U20, the urban track of the G20 leaders’ organization this year under the presidency of Saudi Arabia.

It is the third occasion that the U20 has met, and delegates from around the world will debate – virtually – all the familiar issues of urbanization: mobility, transportation, architecture and design, demographics, education and social services. But in 2020, they will debate for the first time whether the pandemic is, as some analysts believe, the death knell of the city.

“The pandemic has the potential to really affect cities,” Peter Clark, professor of European urban history, has said, pointing not just to the exodus of people fearing infection – like they did from plague outbreaks in the medieval world – but also the long-term adoption of working and socializing habits that have become the norm during the coronavirus lockdowns.



In this file photo taken on August 6, 2020 tourists visit the Esplanade des Droits de l’Homme with the Eiffel tower in the background, in Paris.  
(AFP/File Photo)

Mark Zuckerberg, the founder and CEO of Facebook, says he expects half his company’s workforce to be working from home in the next 10 years, and many other executives are thinking about the future of their businesses in the age of “telecommuting.”

Even if they don’t leave en masse, avoiding the prospect of “ghost cities,”

the economics of modern urban life is likely to change dramatically. Highrise and high-density office space will become less attractive and financially viable, while the armies of support workers that make urban life bearable – from metro drivers to sandwich makers – will come under economic pressure to move too.

However, many experts believe that, although urban communities will have to adapt to the new post-pandemic reality, there is still much to admire and appreciate about city life. In the Middle East, home to many of the fastest growing cities on the planet, that is certainly the case. For example, it is hard to see dynamic hi-tech metropolises such as Dubai and Manama – fishing villages in the lifetimes of some of their older inhabitants – ever reverting to their previous roles.



A near-deserted tourist boat travels past the London Eye in central London on September 24, 2020, during the novel coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic. (AFP/File Photo)

Certainly Riyadh – from where the U20 is being virtually run – has few doubts about its future. The city has grown exponentially in size in the past few decades, and is now home to 7.5 million people. But it is also in the middle of a multibillion-dollar expansion strategy that will see it grow to 15 million inhabitants by the year 2030, with plans to improve the quality of life for its residents with greater mobility, more public spaces and communal leisure facilities, and all the trappings of an artistic and cultural hub.

Fahd Al-Rasheed, president of the Royal Commission for Riyadh City, spoke recently of the ambition to turn the Saudi capital into something like



Florence during the Italian Renaissance. It is difficult to see how that could even be contemplated if an age of social distancing was near.

Cities have risen and fallen throughout history, but have always been succeeded by another, usually grander, urban metropolis. A wise English writer, Samuel Johnson, said: "When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life." History suggests that principle applies not only to the British capital, but to the very concept of the city.

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Riyadh hosts Urban20 talks in preparation for G20 summit  
G20's urban engagement group identifies key issues affecting cities



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## Kuwait's new emir Sheikh Nawaf brings decades of ministerial experience

Author:

Tue, 2020-09-29 22:42

RIYADH: Kuwait's Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah will be sworn in as the nation's new emir on Wednesday.

Sheikh Nawaf, 83, served as the crown prince since 2006 and is the brother of the late emir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, whose death was announced on Tuesday.

Born June 25, 1937, Sheikh Nawaf became governor of Kuwait's Hawalli region at the age of 25. In 1978 he became the country's interior minister, a position he held for nearly a decade.

Sheikh Nawaf's moved to become Kuwait's defense minister in 1988 and was in the role in 1990, when Saddam Hussein ordered his forces to invade Kuwait from Iraq.

"Our citizens inside Kuwait are disobeying orders and not following instructions and they are being mistreated," Sheikh Nawaf said at the time of the seven-month occupation.

He also served as the deputy National Guard commander from 1994 to 2003. As interior minister, Sheikh Nawaf negotiated in 1980 an end to the hijacking of a Boeing 727 heading from Beirut to Kuwait City. The hijackers ultimately gave up the plane without harming any passengers on board.

He briefly served as social affairs and labor minister after the Iraq war and again as interior minister. Sheikh Nawaf is married, with four sons and one daughter.

\*With AP and Reuters



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Saudi Arabia's king, crown prince offer condolences after death of Kuwaiti emir  
Kuwait emir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah dies aged 91

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## [Leaders of Arab world and beyond mourn Sheikh Sabah](#)

Tue, 2020-09-29 22:40

CAIRO: Leaders across the world have offered tributes to Kuwaiti emir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah following his death earlier on Tuesday. Sheikh Sabah was widely respected for his leadership and as a seasoned diplomat who could mediate across the region's divides. Condolence messages streamed in from across the region and from Western countries soon after news of his death broke on state television. Sheikh Sabah "was an extraordinary symbol of wisdom and generosity, a

messenger of peace, a bridge-builder," said UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

The UAE's Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, described the late emir as "a great pioneer in Gulf cooperation." The UAE also announced a three-day mourning period.

In Saudi Arabia, the royal court said the emir died after a journey full of achievement and generous service to his country and humanity. The Kuwaiti emir left behind "a procession full of achievements and endeavors exerted to best serve his country, the Arab as well as the Islamic nations and the entire humanity," the statement said.

The US Ambassador to Kuwait Alina Romanowski called Sheikh Sabah a "popular leader and special friend of the US." The embassy said he "devoted his life to peace and regional stability."

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson also said Sheikh Sabah "made a personal contribution to regional stability and humanitarian assistance which will long be remembered."

British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said described Al Sabah as "a great humanitarian leader and a true friend of the United Kingdom."

"He served Kuwait for many years with dedication, and as a founding father of the GCC he contributed over many decades to maintaining peace and stability in the region."

In Egypt, President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi expressed "great sadness" over Sheikh Sabah's death, recalling the long-standing "fraternal stance" of the emir toward Egypt.

Egypt also announced three days of mourning over the emir's passing.

In Lebanon, where the late Kuwaiti leader played a key role in trying to end the country's ruinous 1975-90 civil war and later helped with its reconstruction, politicians offered their condolences.

"With the death of Sheikh Sabah, Lebanon has lost a great brother who stood by the Lebanese during the difficult circumstances over the past years," said a statement from Lebanese President Michel Aoun.

\*With AP





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Kuwait emir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah dies aged 91