

Egyptian minister discusses agreements to finance Sinai Development Program

Author:

Wed, 2020-09-16 22:42

CAIRO: Egypt has signed three agreements worth around \$885 million with Arab funds since the start of the year to finance the Sinai Peninsula Development Program.

Egyptian Minister of International Cooperation Rania Al-Mashat said on Tuesday that the agreements would finance the program, support structural reform and improve the efficiency of the government's public financial management, as well as strengthen the Ministry of Health's capacity to combat the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The agreements are part of the International Cooperation Ministry's efforts, through economic diplomacy, to provide financing for development projects in accordance with the priorities of the National Development Agenda 2030 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and to enhance cooperation with development partners and strengthen economic relations with international and regional organizations.

Al-Mashat said in a statement that an agreement worth \$637.9 million was signed with the Arab Monetary Fund to support structural and institutional reform to raise the efficiency of public financial management in line with the country's economic reform program.

She added that this agreement falls within the framework of the economic reform program begun in 2016 to protect the economy and has five main objectives: To enhance the preparation and implementation of the state budget; develop tax administration; strengthen government procurement management; improve the social protection system; and enhance general debt management.

The minister highlighted another agreement worth about \$243.2 million with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, which will be used to establish a clean-water system for the Bahr Al-Baqar drain, within the Sinai Peninsula Development Plan.

She emphasized that the project will increase agricultural production, link the Sinai Peninsula with the Delta region, and provide job opportunities and improved services. A navigation channel of 20 square kilometers will be established, as will pumping stations to transport Bahr Al-Baqar sewage water from the west of the Suez Canal to the east; a treatment plant; farms; facilities for agricultural processing and preparing studies, designs and tenders; and consultancy services to oversee the project.

The estimated cost of the project to establish the Bahr Al-Baqar drainage system is about \$1 billion. The Ministry of International Cooperation had

previously signed three agreements in the same framework, one with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development worth \$238 million and two with the Kuwait Fund for Development worth \$255 million.

Al-Mashat added that a grant agreement worth \$3.3 million had been signed with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development to support efforts to combat COVID-19.

Egypt's cooperation with Arab funds began in 1974, since when deals worth a total of roughly \$12.5 billion have been signed, including a current portfolio of \$6.9 billion, which includes the Kuwait Fund for Development, the Saudi Fund for Development, the Abu Dhabi Fund for development, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, and the Khalifa Fund for Enterprise Development.



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[Yemen warring parties to travel to](#)

Switzerland to discuss prisoner releases

Author:

Reuters

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Tue, 2020-09-15 14:58

UNITED NATIONS: Delegations from Yemen's warring parties are due to meet in Switzerland this week for talks on a UN-backed prisoner exchange deal, which UN Yemen envoy Martin Griffiths said on Tuesday he hopes will result in the release of some detainees.

Griffiths told the UN Security Council that "logistical arrangements permitting" the talks would resume in Switzerland this week between the two delegations. A UN source said the talks were due to start on Thursday.

"The parties committed to release conflict-related prisoners and detainees back in 2018 in Stockholm, and furthered their discussions to fulfill that commitment in Amman earlier this year," Griffiths told the council. "What I hope is that this meeting will actually result in the release of some prisoners."

Mohammed Abdulsalam, chief negotiator of the Houthi movement, told Reuters his group's committee is set to leave Sanaa on a UN plane.

The Iran-allied Houthis and Yemen's Saudi-backed government are trying to reach an agreement to end a years-long war and ease a humanitarian crisis in the Arabian Peninsula's poorest country.

Griffiths told the 15-member UN Security Council he sent an "advanced draft" of a cease-fire deal to Yemen's warring parties last week and "now is the time for the parties to swiftly conclude the negotiations."

He also said the political importance of gas-rich Marib – the last government stronghold where fighting has raged over the past year – should not be underestimated and that "military shifts and consequences and events in Marib have ripple effects on dynamics of the conflict across Yemen."



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Egypt supports Saudi efforts to solve Yemeni crisis

[Dubai Police arrest man dancing at local cafe in viral video](#)

Tue, 2020-09-15 17:51

DUBAI: An Emirati man has been arrested in Dubai for dancing in public at a local cafe after footage of his performance was widely circulated online. In the clip, the man dressed in the traditional white thobe and headwear is seen dancing to local music next to the table he was sat at in a cafe in Deira. The audience around him can be seen clapping, with some taking videos of the performance.

Dubai Police said they arrested the young Emirati man for dancing "indecently" at the cafe on the charge of committing a "Public Indecent Act", their Twitter account said.

The statement said the man dancing in the video has been identified, as well as the person who took the video, and both have been arrested.

Dubai Police arrest a man for committing an indecent act publicly.
pic.twitter.com/BrvvIop9oe

– Dubai Police شرطة دبي (@DubaiPoliceHQ) [September 13, 2020](#)

Police said the person who shot and posted the video on social media “violated public morality” by doing so, and this is a crime punishable by anti-cybercrime laws in the emirate. Brigadier Jamal Salem Al Jallaf, Director of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) at Dubai Police, said Article (358) of the UAE Penal code states that whoever openly commits an indecent and disgraceful act shall be punished by detention for a period of at least six months.



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Dubai YouTubers host baby gender reveal on Burj Khalifa Israeli brand shoots pyjama advert in Dubai after normalization deal

[UAE official says Israel accord should dispel doubts over F-35 sale](#)

Author:

Reuters

ID:

1600181414664453500

Tue, 2020-09-15 13:35

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates wants to modernize its military and a request for US F-35 warplanes has been on the table since before a normalization deal with Israel, the minister of state for foreign affairs, Anwar Gargash, said on Tuesday.

The agreement, known as the Abraham Accord, should dispel "any grain of doubt" on why the Gulf state should get stealth F-35 fighter jets from the United States, Gargash told reporters.

"The UAE seeks like any country that takes its military seriously, to modernize its military, always, so our request for the F35 and other systems pre-dates this agreement," he said.

The UAE's existing F-16 jets are now almost two decades old and it is time to renew them, he said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said his government would oppose any US F-35 warplane sales to the UAE, despite forging relations with the Gulf power. US President Donald Trump on Tuesday told Fox News he would have no problem selling the planes to the UAE.

The UAE and Gulf neighbor Bahrain are set to sign normalization accords with Israel at a White House ceremony on Tuesday.

Gargash said the country's decision to normalize ties broke a "psychological barrier" and is the way forward for the region, giving it more leverage.

He said Israel suspending its planned annexation of Palestinian land would stop the two-state solution being undermined and that the United States' mediator role was assurance that further annexation would be suspended.

The Emirati minister said it was not the time to revise the Arab Peace Initiative, and that it remains the cornerstone of the UAE's commitment to the Palestinian cause.

A strategic breakthrough is needed, he said, but "it will not happen overnight."



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A 'new dawn' as UAE and Bahrain sign Abraham Accord with Israel
Blow to Erdogan as US boots Turkey out of F-35 strike fighter program

[A 'new dawn' as UAE and Bahrain sign Abraham Accord with Israel](#)

Tue, 2020-09-15 16:58

WASHINGTON: The UAE and Bahrain signed historic agreements with Israel today in a ceremony overseen by Donald Trump in Washington.

The Abraham Accord means the two Gulf countries joined Egypt and Jordan as the only Arab nations to have full relations with Israel.

The ceremony was attended by the UAE's foreign minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed, Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani, the foreign minister of Bahrain and

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

[#VIDEO](#): “Thank you for choosing peace and for halting the annexation of Palestinian territories,” says UAE foreign minister [#AbdullahBinZayed](#) at [#AbrahamAccord](#) peace signing ceremony with UAE and Bahrain [#UAEIsrael](#) [#BahrainIsrael](#)<https://t.co/igXh6Fi3wl>
pic.twitter.com/UIKeZdn8aq

– Arab News (@arabnews) [September 15, 2020](#)

The signing took place on the South Lawn of the White House – the same place where Israeli and Palestinian leaders signed the Oslo Accords in 1993.

“I stand here today to extend a hand of peace and receive a hand of peace,” Sheikh Abdullah said.

Addressing Netanyahu, he said: “Thank you for choosing peace and halting the annexation of Palestinian territories.”

“The [#UAE](#) is so delighted and privileged to play a role for peace.” Ahead of the [#UAEIsrael](#) [#Peaceaccord](#) signing ceremony [@WhiteHouse](#) today, UAE Foreign Minister HH Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed highlights the positive impact the agreement will have on the entire region [#OFMUAE](#) pic.twitter.com/AUkWeRJLDk

– OFM (@OFMUAE) [September 15, 2020](#)

Al-Zayani described the accord as a historic step on the road to a “genuine and lasting peace.”

He said he hoped the agreement would lead to a “comprehensive and enduring two-state solution for the Palestinian people.”

During the signing ceremony, the parties inked the Abraham Accord document along with a treaty of “peace, diplomatic relations and full normalization.”

Opinion

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

Bahrain, which only announced on Friday that an agreement had been reached, also signed a “declaration of peace” with Israel.

[#VIDEO](#): “After decades of division and conflict, we mark the dawn of a new Middle East,” US President Donald [#Trump](#) said at the [#AbrahamAccord](#) peace signing ceremony between the UAE, Bahrain and Israel [#UAEIsrael](#) [#BahrainIsrael](#) <https://t.co/igXh6Fi3wL> pic.twitter.com/VGwgAFTcMt

– Arab News (@arabnews) [September 15, 2020](#)

The UAE announced last month it had reached a deal with Israel to normalize relations in return for a promise not to annex large areas of the occupied Palestinian West Bank.

The two countries have already held talks across a range of areas of cooperation and an Israeli and American delegation visited Abu Dhabi for on Aug. 31. The group, which included Trump advisor Jared Kushner, arrived on the first commercial flight from Israel to the UAE.

[#VIDEO](#): “This peace will eventually expand to include other Arab states and ultimately it can end the Arab-Israeli conflict once and for all,” Israel’s [#Netanyahu](#) says at [#AbrahamAccord](#) peace signing ceremony with UAE, Bahrain [#UAEIsrael](#) [#BahrainIsrael](#)<https://t.co/igXh6Fi3wL> pic.twitter.com/jee1e8WlST

– Arab News (@arabnews) [September 15, 2020](#)

Donald Trump opened Tuesday’s ceremony praising the leaders of Israel, the UAE and Bahrain for reaching agreements that he said would “serve as the foundation for a comprehensive peace across the entire region.”

“After decades of division and conflict we mark the dawn of a new Middle East,” Trump said. “We’re here this afternoon to change the course of history.”

Earlier he said five or six more countries were ready to also open up relations with Israel.

HISTORIC day for PEACE in the Middle East – I am welcoming leaders from Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the Kingdom of Bahrain to the White House to sign landmark deals that no one thought was possible. MORE countries to follow! pic.twitter.com/whvJpNPrri

– Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) [September 15, 2020](#)

Netanyahu called the day a “pivot of history that heralds a new dawn of peace.”

“Ultimately it can end the Arab-Israeli conflict once and for all,” he said.

The event was attended by 700 people including former US ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley and former British premier Tony Blair.

Earlier, the UAE’s Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Anwar Gargash, said the deal had “broken the psychological barrier” and was “the way forward” for the region.



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UAE, Bahrain eye manifold benefits from Israel ties normalization UAE-Israel accord creates 'new environment' for Mideast peace: Official