

# Hundreds of Israelis protest in Jerusalem against Netanyahu

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JERUSALEM: Hundreds of Israelis protested Saturday evening against Benjamin Netanyahu outside his Jerusalem residence as the Israeli prime minister faces corruption charges.

The demonstration was fueled by the detention of seven protesters Friday who held a smaller rally against Netanyahu's continuation as premier despite being under indictment. The demonstrators held banners describing Netanyahu as "crime minister."

Among the seven detainees was a former top Israeli air force general. On Saturday, Israeli police said the protest a day earlier was "illegal" because demonstrators blocked the roads.

Three of the protesters, including retired Brig. Gen. Amir Haskel, remained in detention for refusing the police's release terms and insisting on participating in Saturday's protest, Israeli media reported.

Last month, Netanyahu's trial on charges of fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes opened in a Jerusalem court. It is scheduled to resume next month.

Netanyahu's new government took office last month, ending more than a year of political stalemate.

Under a power sharing deal, Netanyahu was permitted to remain as prime minister, while his rival, Benny Gantz, was named defense minister and alternate prime minister.

The two men have agreed to switch posts after 18 months, though many analysts do not expect the government to last that long.



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Jordan Valley farmers fear for the future as Israel's West Bank annexation looms UAE and Israeli companies sign deal to tackle COVID-19

## [Egyptian doctors stress role of physical therapy in treating COVID-19](#)

Sat, 2020-06-27 22:45

CAIRO: Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) cases continue to rise worldwide. While many acknowledge the indispensable role of physicians in diagnosing and treating patients infected with it, there persists a lack of awareness regarding the importance of physical therapy, especially during recovery.

"Physiotherapists have been at the frontlines in Egypt during this crisis. At least three were infected and died while working with COVID-19 patients," Dr.

Mohammed Magdy El-Meligie, lecturer of physical therapy at the October 6 University in Cairo, told Arab News.

“Physiotherapists are an important part of a multidisciplinary team that provides treatment for patients infected with COVID-19,” El-Meligie said. “The role of physical therapy during this crisis can be summed up in this simple statement: A doctor may save your life, while a physiotherapist can improve your quality of life.”

According to El-Meligie, nearly half of COVID-19 patients who require hospitalization need oxygen treatment, while five percent of cases are held in intensive care units (ICUs) to receive the necessary support. These patients pass through different stages as they face an uphill battle to recover and return to prior levels of function. The role of physical therapy in each stage varies according to the severity of the case.

For example, during the intensive care stage, patients suffer from mucous hypersecretion with difficulty in clearing these secretions.

“This may lead to several complications, such as difficulty breathing and respiratory tract obstruction, which may eventually cause respiratory failure,” El-Meligie explained.

“Physiotherapy during this stage aims to facilitate the clearance of these secretions and improve breathing capacity by applying airway clearance techniques. These include deep breathing exercises, which encourage coughing and strengthen respiratory muscles,” he said.

El-Meligie added that manual therapy techniques such as percussion and vibration help to mobilize secretions from stubborn peripheral areas in the lungs to more central areas, which may help patients expel them in the easiest way possible. Sometimes, airway mechanical suctioning may be used in critically ill patients.

El-Meligie pointed out that COVID-19 patients suffer from a lack of physical activity and prolonged bed rest, which have a negative impact on several body systems, such as the musculoskeletal, cardiovascular and even cognitive systems.

Prolonged bed rest may affect a patient’s ability to return to normal life even after complete recovery. It is thus important to maintain muscular status and prevent weakness from developing in skeletal muscles. Neuromuscular electrical stimulation can restore muscle function in critically ill patients who are unable to perform any sort of activity.

El-Meligie emphasized that the role of physical therapy is not limited to the hospitalization period only, but must also continue when the patient returns home.

“After full recovery, patients often become worried that it will take them quite a while to return to their normal energy and fitness levels. That is why we have a home program suitable for each patient. The program includes exercises that strengthen muscles, restore joint flexibility and improve lung

capacity,” he said.

El-Meligie stressed the importance of physiotherapy for recovering patients.

“Due to the increasing number of ICU admissions and prolonged bed rest associated with COVID-19, comprehensive physiotherapy programs should be implemented to accelerate patients’ functional recovery and prevent the complications of immobilization, especially in ventilator-dependent patients,” he said.



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Egypt eases restrictions despite surge in coronavirus infections

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## [Palestinians close Bethlehem after virus spike](#)

Author:

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RAMALLAH, Palestinian Territories: The governor of Bethlehem announced Saturday the temporary closure of the Palestinian city to contain the spread of coronavirus after a sharp rise in infections in the occupied West Bank. The 48-hour closure will begin Monday from 6.00am (0300 GMT), governor Kamil Hmeid said in a statement.

The closure comes after the West Bank cities of Hebron and Nablus were closed last week for five days and 48 hours respectively.

The two cities, alongside Bethlehem, have recorded a major spike in new coronavirus cases.

The Palestinian health ministry announced 67 new cases of the COVID-19 respiratory illness on Saturday, of which 33 were in the Bethlehem district. The ministry has recorded a total of 1,552 virus cases in the West Bank, including two deaths.

Like the West Bank, Israel has also recorded a recent surge in coronavirus cases.

Meanwhile, in the Gaza Strip, the Palestinian enclave blockaded by Israel, 72 people have tested positive for coronavirus, with one death.

Bethlehem, where Christians believe Christ was born, was initially put into lockdown in March, after recording the first coronavirus case in the West Bank.

Schools were closed and non-essential travel and activities were that month banned, as part of the efforts to tackle the virus.



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## [Migrant workers stuck in virus-hit Iraq with no wages or way home](#)

Author:

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1593269931643467000

Sat, 2020-06-27 14:52

BAGHDAD: For years, Rajib Sheikh wired money to his native Bangladesh from his day job in Iraq. But now, stuck without wages, he's asking his family back home for help.

The 26-year-old patisserie chef has gone three months without wages, and his Iraqi employer just stopped paying for his food stipend, too.

He is one of thousands of foreign migrant workers now stranded in Iraq with no income or way to get back home, watching the economy around them collapse.

"We're used to sending money back to our country, but now I had to ask my cousin to transfer me money," said Sheikh, who arrived in the southern oil-rich Basra province seven years ago.

"We hope we can go back to our jobs because it's not just us who are starving, but our families back home, too," he said.

The world economy has seen a dramatic slowdown due to the spread of COVID-19, but Iraq – OPEC's second-largest crude producer – was also hit hard by a collapse in oil prices.

That has sent the country spiralling into its worst fiscal crisis in years, with the World Bank estimating GDP will shrink by 10 percent this year.

Informal workers, it noted, were at a higher risk of falling into "deep poverty" due to the lockdown measures enforced to halt the spread of the novel coronavirus.

Nafis Abbas, a 32-year-old Pakistani tailor in Baghdad, returned to work last week after nearly four months of total shutdown.

"I want to go back (home) but I don't have any money. If I want to go to Pakistan now, it costs \$700 and I don't have anything – not even 1,000 Iraqi dinars," equivalent to less than a dollar, he told AFP.

Hundreds of thousands of migrant workers, largely from South Asian countries, have flocked to Iraq over the last decade to work in a range of businesses, from oil fields to restaurants.

Among them are 250,000 registered Bangladeshi workers, according to Mohammed

Rezaul Kabir of the country's embassy in Baghdad.

"More than 20,000 have lost their jobs," he told AFP, adding that the numbers could be even higher, given how many work informally.

They include 9,000 Bangladeshi laborers at international oil companies and contractors in Basra, once seen as lucky for working in such a lucrative industry.

"Oil prices going down led to a lot of oil fields laying off employees, some of them without even a final paycheck," said Kabir.

Many Bangladeshi oil workers headed north to Baghdad, hoping their embassy could send them home.

"We are making lists and contacting people as soon as we find a place for them. We are trying our best to transfer them back home but it is expensive and we need a lot of flights to get them there," said Kabir.

According to an International Labour Organization (ILO) survey, 95 percent of businesses in Iraq have suspended work due to COVID-19.

Four out of 10 said they had to lay off some workers, and many expected the crisis to continue another four months.

Salem Ahmed, an Iraqi restaurateur who employs Bangladeshi, Egyptian and Iraqi workers, said his establishment had been hit hard by the lockdown.

"We estimate our losses at about \$20,000 per month," he said.

"The government didn't provide any support to businesses, and we're still expected to pay taxes by July," he said.

Even once the lockdown is fully lifted, many business owners surveyed by the ILO predicted they would be unable to bring their operations or sales back to pre-coronavirus levels.

Forty percent feared their businesses will shut either temporarily or permanently.

"The government should explore all options to finance measures that support enterprises, and it should provide emergency support to all workers, mainly those who are working informally," said Maha Kattaa, ILO's Iraq country coordinator.

But Mohammed Fadel Lhak, a 49-year-old Bangladeshi worker, wasn't optimistic. Lhak was in a precarious situation well before the pandemic and the plunge in oil prices, living hand-to-mouth every month from menial jobs at small businesses in Baghdad.

Last year, he always managed to sort something out – but this year feels different.

"Everything is closed now. With the coronavirus, there are no more customers. We just hope for things to get better so we can move on with our lives," Lhak said.









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Iraq hit with record-high COVID-19 deaths

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## [Yemen president urges STC to implement Saudi-led Riyadh Agreement](#)

Author:

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RIYADH: Yemen's president has called on the separatist Southern Transitional Council (STC) to take advantage of Saudi Arabia's efforts to facilitate the

implementation of the Riyadh Agreement.

President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi added that implementing the agreement is in the Yemeni nation's interest, will stop the bloodshed in the country and will unite efforts to fight the Houthis.

Hadi added that the internationally recognized government has fully adhered to a cease-fire in the country's southern governorate of Abyan so that implementation of the agreement could resume.

Commenting on bilateral relations with the Kingdom, the Yemeni president said "We face great and common challenges and lots of coordination, patience and hard work is needed to overcome them."

Tensions have escalated over the last several months since the separatists declared self-rule in Aden and other southern provinces.

This prompted Yemen's government in May to launch a military offensive in Abyan aimed at ousting the separatists from Aden.







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