

Pompeo: US will stop Iran buying weapons when UN arms embargo lifted

Wed, 2020-04-29 17:07

LONDON: The United States insisted Wednesday it would not allow Iran buy conventional weapons when a UN arms embargo is lifted later this year.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the world realizes that Tehran can not be allowed to be sold weapons systems while it continues to wreak havoc in the Middle East.

The embargo is due to expire in October and the US is hoping to find away to get the UN Security Council to agree to extend and strengthen the measure.

"We're not going to let that happen," Pompeo said when asked about the embargo expiring.

"Does anybody think that the nation that today is conducting terror campaigns by Lebanese Hezbollah, or Iraqi Shia movements or firing military missiles into the air ought to be permitted to purchase conventional weapons systems in just a few months?"

"I think the world realises that's a mistake."

Pompeo said the US would work with the Security Council to extend the prohibition, but if that failed, it would evaluate "every possibility."

He said the situation was one of the many failings of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal designed to reduce Tehran's nuclear activity in exchange for an easing of sanctions.

Donald Trump withdrew the US in 2018 from what he described as "the worst deal in history", which agreed for the embargo to end on Oct. 18. Washington reimposed sanctions and increased America's military capabilities in the Gulf after Iran was blamed for attacks on shipping and Saudi Arabia.

Pompeo also accused Iran of flying support to Venezuela – another country that the US is targeting with heavy sanctions.

Today, [@SecPompeo](#) spoke on [#Iran](#) and the Maduro regime, [#5G](#) security, and U.S. foreign assistance in the face of the [#COVID19](#) pandemic. pic.twitter.com/dGpENh5zVx

– Department of State (@StateDept) [April 29, 2020](#)

He said over the last few days multiple aircraft belonging to Mahan Air had

transferred “unknown support” to the regime of Nicolas Maduro.

“This is the same terrorist airline that Iran used to move weapons and fighters around the Middle East,” Pompeo said.

He called for the flights to stop and for other countries not allow Mahan Air to fly through their airspaces.



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[Mike Pompeo](#)

Pentagon downplays Iran military satellite as ‘tumbling webcam’Iran space program front for nuclear ambitions: Pompeo

[Pompeo says US ‘concerned’ over south Yemen separatist self-rule declaration](#)

Author:

Reuters

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1588164784794020700

Tue, 2020-04-28 23:35

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Tuesday Washington was 'concerned' over the Southern Transitional Council (STC), a separatist group, declaring self-rule in Yemen's south, warning such actions threatened efforts to revive talks between the Yemeni government and Houthi rebels.

"Such unilateral actions only exacerbate instability in Yemen," Pompeo said in a statement. "They are especially unhelpful at a time when the country is threatened by COVID-19 and also threaten to complicate the efforts of the UN Special Envoy to revive political negotiations between the government and the Houthi rebels."

The Arab coalition, which includes Saudi Arabia, has announced a unilateral truce prompted by a United Nations plea to focus on the coronavirus pandemic. The Houthis have not accepted it and violence has continued.

Yemen's internationally recognized government warned of "catastrophic consequences" after the STC on Sunday declared emergency rule in southern governorates including Aden, interim seat of the government that was ousted from power in the capital, Sanaa, by the Houthi group in late 2014.

"We call on the STC and the Republic of Yemen government to re-engage in the political process provided under the Riyadh Agreement," Pompeo said.

On Monday, the coalition engaged in Yemen urged the STC to rescind its move, saying it was an "escalatory action" at a time when all parties should focus on confronting the novel coronavirus.



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Saudi cabinet urges southern Yemeni separatists to reverse self-rule decision
US embassy in Yemen rejects 'unilateral steps' taken by southern separatists

[World Bank provides Jordan \\$20 million coronavirus relief package](#)

Author:

Wed, 2020-04-29 10:03

DUBAI: The World Bank has approved a \$20 million project to help Jordan respond to the health impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak, state news agency Petra reported.

The new COVID-19 Emergency Response project will support the Ministry of Health's efforts in preventing, detecting and responding to the threat posed by the pandemic.

This fast-track assistance package falls under the \$6 billion COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Program approved by the World Bank's executive directors earlier this month to strengthen the responses of developing countries to the pandemic.

"Jordan is affected by a pandemic whose impacts expand beyond the health sector and cause an economic slowdown and weaker growth prospects," Saroj Kumar Jha, World Bank Mashreq Regional Director, said.

The regional director said that supporting Jordan's ability to face the coronavirus health crisis is crucial to prevent a set-back in the significant improvements in health outcomes the has achieved over the past two decades.

"Jordan was one of the first countries in the region, if not the world, to take early and strict measures to contain and mitigate the spread of COVID-19," Jordanian Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Wissam Rabadi said.

Rabadi added that despite the decline in the number of cases in the country, Jordan will require support to maintain efforts to ensure the outbreak is properly contained and avoid a new surge in numbers as the country begins to relax its strict measures.

The project will provide support to enhance case detection, testing, recording and reporting, as well as contact tracing, risk assessment and clinical care management over the next two years.

The plan, which was prepared with WHO, will be updated periodically to identify financial requirements for several outbreak scenarios.



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Brazil passes 5,000 deaths from coronavirus

[Egypt tech firm aids virus fight with 3D-printed face shields](#)

Author:

Farid Farid | AFP

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1588093585298206800

Tue, 2020-04-28 13:05

CAIRO: Many health care workers in Egypt's threadbare hospital system must provide their own protective gear, so when a digital design company started 3-D printing face shields, they gratefully accepted.

Since the novel coronavirus first hit Egypt, medical doctor Yahya Diwer has been working all-night shifts as head of an intensive care unit in a Cairo hospital.

Around 100 COVID-19 cases have since passed through his Sheikh Zayed Al-Nahyan hospital, located in a low-income suburb of the capital, exposing staff to a heightened risk of contagion.

So when Diwer spotted a widely shared social media post by the Cairo-based tech company Giza Systems last month he was among the first to get in touch via Facebook.

The company uses digital printing technology mainly to produce assistive devices for people with disabilities, working in a lab called Project Nitrous.

With the arrival of the virus – which has by now infected over 4,000 people and claimed 300 lives in Egypt, according to government data – the company quickly jumped into action.

It designed a face shield that can be printed in plastic, cut out by laser and simply assembled, and started delivering the devices to thousands of doctors – for free.

“You feel safe wearing it and the design is sleek,” Diwer told AFP. “It’s easier than wearing a set of goggles and can be easily cleaned.”

Mohamed El Hossary, director of Giza Systems’ Education Foundation, said its usual work aims to create “everyday solutions for those with a disability.

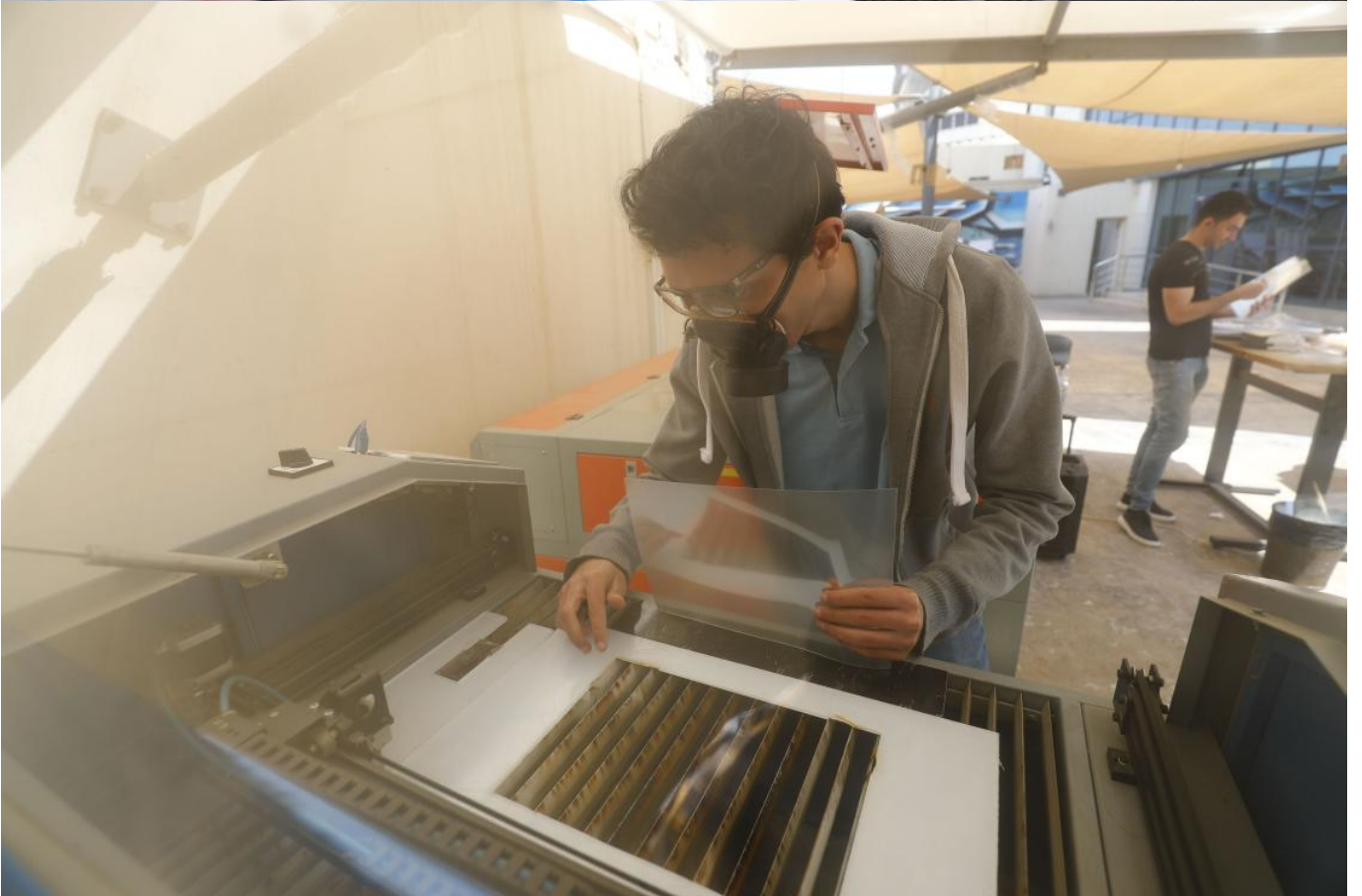
“Since we have experience in assistive technology, we went down to hospitals and asked them what they needed, and that’s how we came up with manufacturing a face shield.”

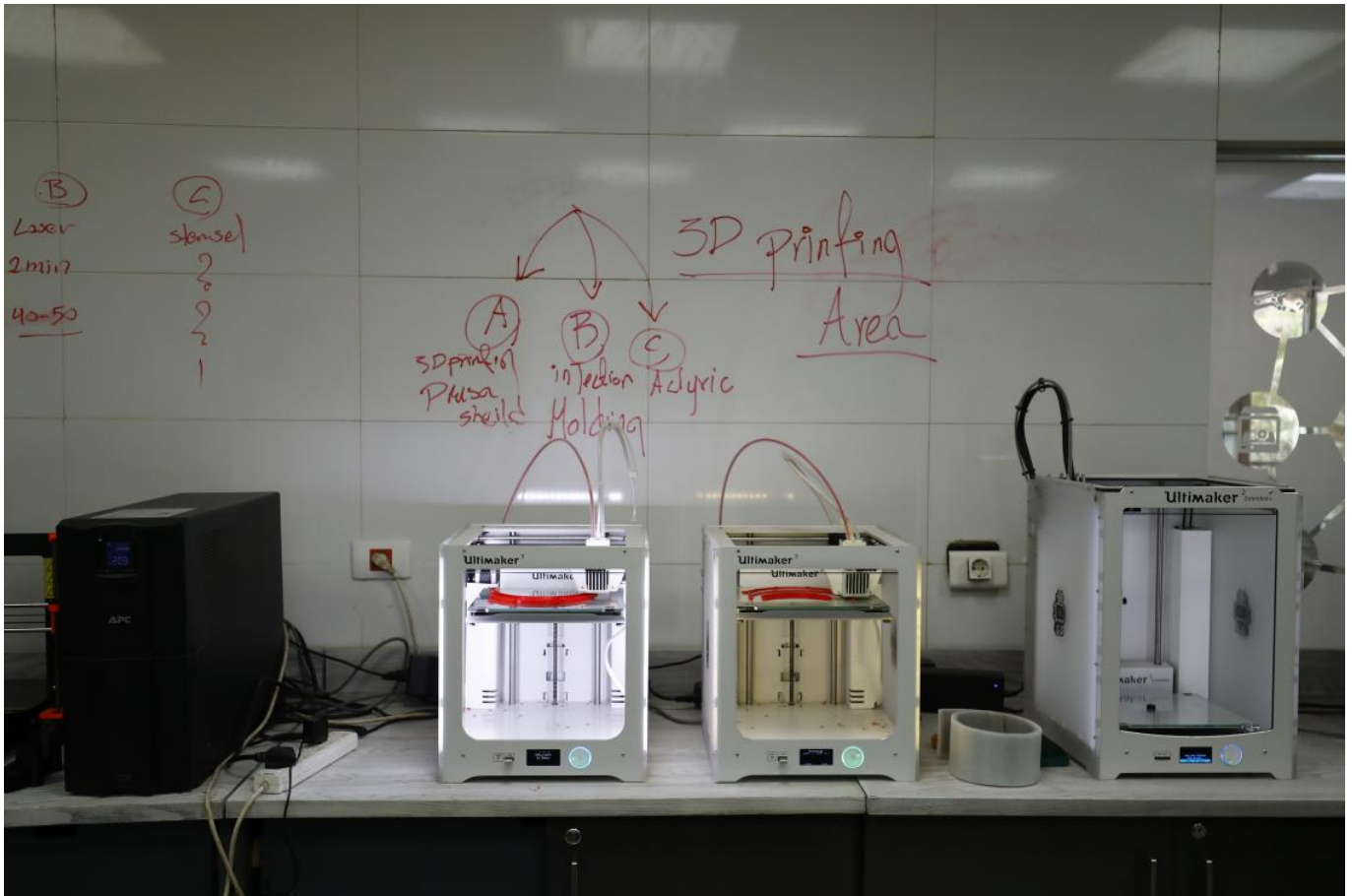
The firm is now distributing around 2,000 face shields a day to medics nationwide and has partnerships with around 25 public and private hospitals. Volunteers such as university student Abdel-Raziq Sabry, 21, help by packing the devices for shipment.

“You don’t want to be sitting at home doing nothing when you can be doing something to help doctors and society as well as the country,” he said.

The frontline efforts of Diwer’s team have been honored. His hospital was chosen by the health ministry as one of the major isolation wards where virus carriers can recover.

In a message he posted on Facebook, the doctor paid tribute to his staff as well as the tech company, saying that “we are so humbled and honored to fight for the people against COVID-19.”





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Egyptian actress Yasmine Sabri opens up about her relationship, gets pranked

[Eastern Libyan forces say Turkish drone killed 5 civilians](#)

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By SAMY MAGDY | AP

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1588090299737971700

Tue, 2020-04-28 13:36

CAIRO: Eastern Libyan forces laying siege to the country's capital of Tripoli accused their rivals Tuesday of staging an attack in which a Turkish drone hit a food truck convoy in the country's west, killing at least five civilians.

The militia groups loosely allied with a UN-supported but weak government in Tripoli denied attacking civilians, saying they targeted trucks carrying equipment and ammunition for eastern forces trying to take the capital. Khalifa Haftar, who declared the start of an operation to root out the militias and unify the country in 2014, is commander of the east-based forces attempting to take control of Tripoli. They control most of eastern and southern Libya. The besieged administration in Tripoli rules just a corner of the country's west. Both sides are supported by a network of fractious militias and foreign powers.

Haftar launched his Tripoli offensive last April. In recent weeks, violence has escalated, with both sides accusing each other of shelling civilian neighborhoods. The UN has said the violence and worsening humanitarian crisis in Libya could amount to war crimes.

Turkey has sent armored drones, air defenses and more recently, Syrian militants with links to extremist groups to prop up the embattled Tripoli government.

There was no immediate comment from Turkish officials on the alleged drone attack.

Ahmed Al-Mosmari, a spokesman for Haftar forces, said the drone strike took place late Monday near the district of Mizda, 184 kilometers south of Tripoli.

The attack came after Haftar, in an attempted show of strength, declared Monday that a 2015 UN-brokered political deal to unite the oil-rich country was "a thing of the past."

The Tripoli-based government said it wasn't surprised by Haftar's announcement and urged Libyans to join "a comprehensive dialogue and continue on the democratic path to reach a comprehensive and permanent solution based on ballot boxes."

While the 2015 agreement has failed to bring unity or stability to the divided country, Haftar's announcement threatens to further complicate UN efforts to broker a political settlement to the civil war.

In Brussels, European Commission spokesman Peter Stano on Tuesday criticized Haftar's announcement. He said "any attempt to push forward unilateral solutions, even more so by force, will never provide a sustainable solution for the country."

Stano said the December 2015 agreement remains the most viable framework for a political solution in Libya. He called on international stakeholders in Libya to "increase their pressure" on the warring parties to end the fighting and bring about a political settlement.

Jalel Harchaoui, a Libya expert at The Netherlands Institute of International Relations, said Haftar's move was "pretty much a coup" that revealed "aspirations that aren't new."

"Haftar takes yet another step toward full military autocracy and absolute control over the territories currently aligned with the LNA," he said. The move could also give the military commander an opportunity to take economic measures to address serious economic and financial crises in areas under his control.

Libya has been in turmoil since 2011, when a civil war toppled long-time dictator Muammar Qaddafi, who was later killed. The chaos has worsened in the recent round of fighting as foreign backers increasingly intervene, despite their pledges to the contrary at a high-profile peace summit in Berlin

earlier this year.



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Libya's Haftar declares UN unity deal 'thing of the past' War-weary Libyans view virus lockdown as another inconvenience