

[Egypt registers highest number of new coronavirus infections](#)

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Tue, 2020-04-28 15:46

CAIRO: Egypt registered 260 new infections of the novel coronavirus and 22 deaths, the health ministry said on Tuesday, the highest daily rise for both figures.

In total 5,042 people have been infected and 359 died since the start of the outbreak, the ministry said in a statement. A total of 1,304 have recovered. Egypt, a country of 100 million, has closed its airports to contain the pandemic and imposed a night curfew but pushed back the starting time to 9 p.m., two hours later than initially in place.



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Moroccans praised for solidarity, charity in Italy

Tue, 2020-04-28 18:04

ROME: Since the start of the coronavirus crisis, the 700,000-strong Moroccan community in Italy has strived to help those in need, in a country that has been hit particularly hard by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

They have no intention to stop doing so during Ramadan, Moroccan Ambassador to Italy Youssef Balla told Arab News.

“Moroccans in Italy have been living the coronavirus crisis just like their Italian brothers live it: In self-isolation, applying social distancing, respecting the rules imposed by the health emergency,” he said, adding that Moroccans constitute “the biggest Arab community in this country.”

According to Italian news agency ANSA, “Moroccans are currently the largest non-EU immigrant community in Italy.”

With the goal of promoting bilateral friendships, numerous cultural and religious projects have been initiated in recent years.

“We’re talking about a well-integrated community that acts as a human bridge between Italy and Morocco,” said Balla, who has been ambassador in Italy since July 2019, having previously been posted in Peru.

“It’s an economically active community – 20 percent of the Moroccan community is composed of entrepreneurs.”

In the previous legislature, Italy’s Parliament included two MPs of Moroccan origin. Many Moroccans are doctors who have been working in Italian hospitals to combat COVID-19.



The embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco in Italy. (Screenshot/AN Photo)

Moroccans in Italy mainly live in the north: In Lombardy, Piedmont and Emilia Romagna. Those are the regions suffering the highest death tolls due to COVID-19, and where infection rates have still not dramatically decreased.

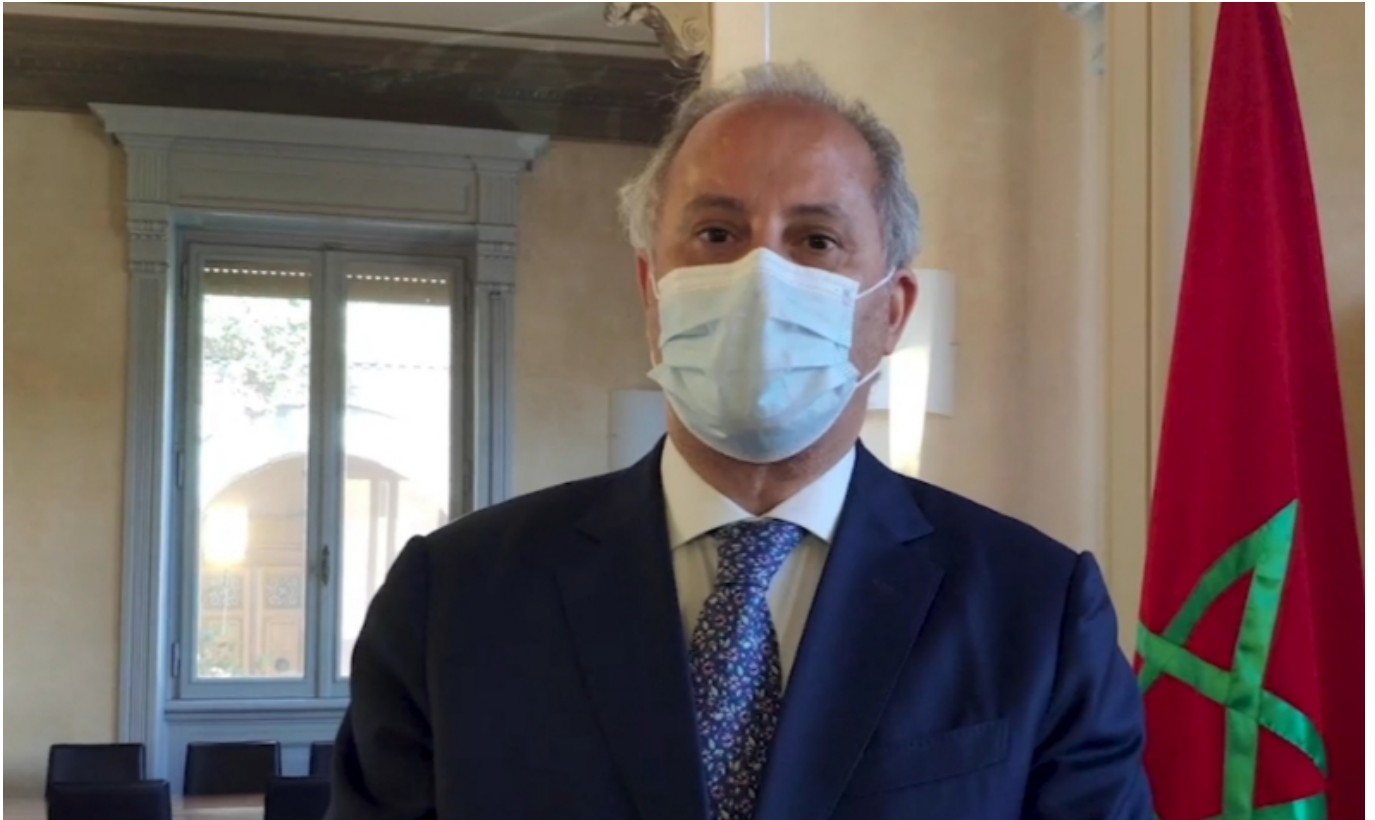
“We’re in the month of Ramadan, a sacred month of spirituality, but also a month of joy during which visits are exchanged, and family and human ties become stronger and stronger. Unfortunately, these traditions this year can’t be respected,” Balla said.

“From the very first moment of the COVID-19 crisis, the Moroccan community has mobilized together with the Italian brothers to bring support and help to both Italian and Moroccan families, without any distinction of race or religion,” he added.

“Moroccans have helped support the impressive effort made so far by the Red Cross and Civil Protection with many donations,” he said.

“We’ve been witnessing many acts of solidarity among Moroccans ... Food aid is donated to the most needy families,” he added.

“There have also been many manifestations of solidarity from Moroccan entrepreneurs ... who have given food to the needy and to medical staff.”



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Virus hits Morocco's small Jewish community hard
Morocco arrests over 4,300 for breaching emergency rules

[Fuel truck bomb kills more than 20 in northern Syria: monitor](#)

Author:

AFP

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Tue, 2020-04-28 14:51

Beirut: A fuel truck bomb killed more than 20 people, including at least six Turkey-backed rebel fighters, on Tuesday in a northern Syrian city controlled by Ankara's local proxies, a war monitor said.

"At least 22 people including civilians were killed and 27 others wounded when an explosive device inside a fuel truck exploded in a market" in the Afrin region, said Rami Abdul Rahman, the head of the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.



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[Iran's regional proxy machine has been derailed, says expert](#)

Mon, 2020-04-27 20:40

LONDON: The killing of Iranian Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani and the lack of dollars have derailed Tehran's regional proxy machine, which will need time to recover, the editor in chief of Al Arabiya English said at a webinar on

Monday.

"The Iranian regime needs US dollars to fund dozens and dozens of militias in Iraq. Many of them it exercises full control over, others a considerable amount – same in Syria and Lebanon," said Mohammed Khalid Alyahya.

The lack of a charismatic leader to replace Soleimani, the commander of Iran's Quds Force who was killed in a US drone strike in Iraq in January, is derailing the proxy machine even further, Alyahya added.

"In the region, limiting Iran's ability to fund its proxy network is the strategy. The US strategy is working. It's not perfect, but it's working," he said.

"What we're seeing right now is the maximum-pressure campaign putting Iran in a corner scrambling for resources."

Alyahya noted that none of the regional actors had a say in the talks that led to the Iran nuclear deal.

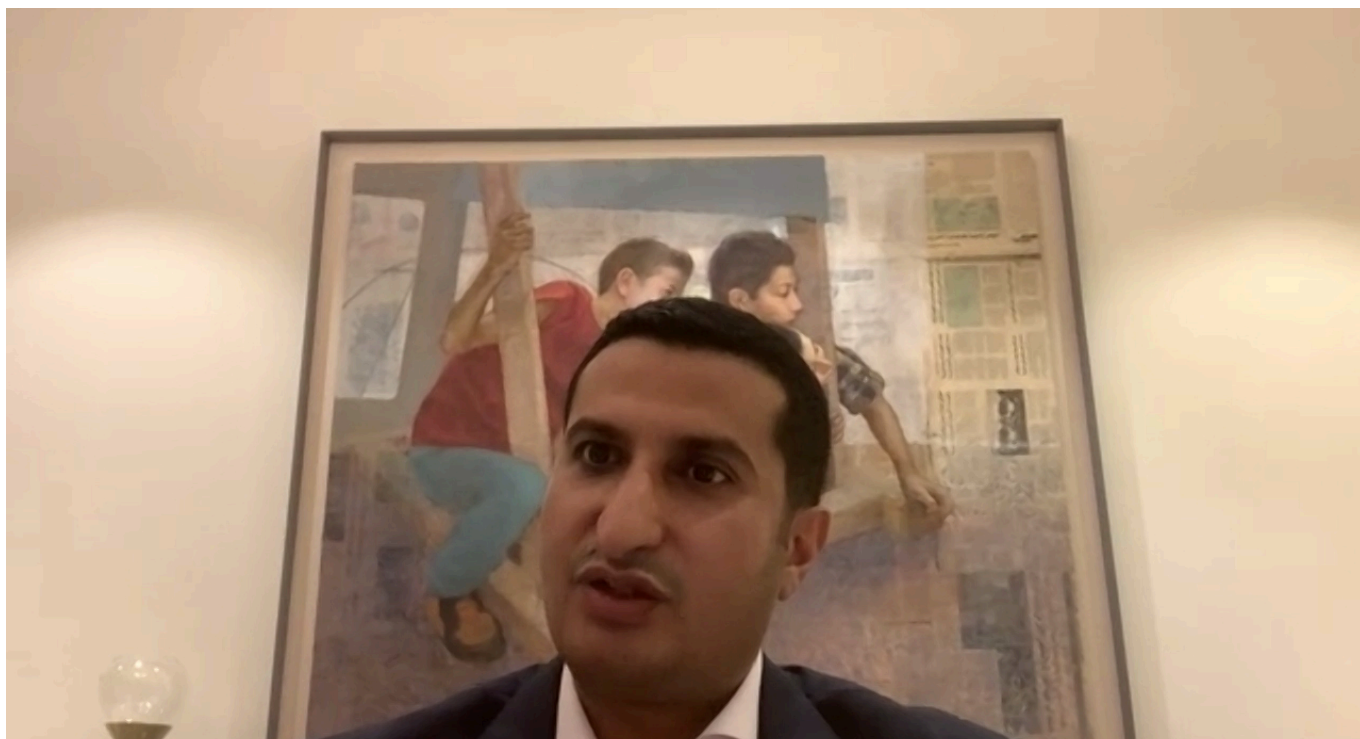
"Every country within range of Iran's ballistic missiles, long range or short, or that contains militias, which are many in the region, wasn't included in the nuclear negotiations," he said.

"Those most at risk from Iranian aggression and expansionism were an afterthought of the discussions," he added.

"Since the deal, Iran stepped up its activities across the region, doubled down on ethnic cleansing and genocide in Syria ... and empowered Hezbollah." On Saudi-Iranian relations, Alyahya said: "If you go to Riyadh and ask what their biggest national security threat is, invariably you'd hear Iran. However, if you were to go to Iran to ask them what their biggest national security threat is, they'd say the US or Israel, or both ...

So primarily it's a conflict between the US and Iran."

The webinar was hosted by the Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, and was co-sponsored by Managing the Atom, the Iran Working Group and the Middle East Initiative.



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[Mohammed Khalid Alyahya](#)

The strike on Iran's SoleimaniUS imposes fresh sanctions on Iranian individuals, companies amid coronavirus

[Two Bahrainis bring fashion world to masks](#)

Author:

AFP

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Mon, 2020-04-27 16:16

MANAMA: As the world combats the spread of the novel coronavirus, two Bahraini entrepreneurs are adding a little color to an item that is now almost part of everyday life – masks.

Noor Khamdan and Nada Alawi want to raise awareness and add enthusiasm to wearing masks in the small Gulf country.

Khamdan's designs include symbols from Gulf culture, ranging from the traditional ghutra (headdress) or the Bahraini flag to the local viral hashtag #Team_Bahrain.

“The mask you are wearing is to protect you and others against COVID-19 and to also bring color and joy into your life in these hard times,” Khamdan, founder of BH Masks, told AFP.

“By giving people the option to invest in colorful, washable masks, we are ensuring medical masks are saved for those who need it the most, such as medical staff,” said the mother of three whose masks cost around \$3.

Like many other Gulf countries, Bahrain has made it mandatory to wear masks outside the home, having eased some restrictions at the start of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

It has so far recorded more than 2,700 infections, including eight deaths. Alawi, co-founder of the lifestyle brand Annada, repurposes uniquely-designed scarves into masks, saying she wants to cater for people who want “something different.”

“Some people want to wear something that gives them a bit of happiness, a bit of inspiration,” she told AFP.

“With masks being mandatory... you can’t tell someone’s feelings, you can’t tell if they’re smiling at you.”

“At least, this is a way to tell someone’s personality when they have color on their face.”

Annada’s masks, which come in a set of three, are giftwrapped in a teal box with a ribbon and cost about \$52.

Twenty-five percent of the proceeds go to charity.

“Even at times like this, you want to get a surprise and to feel like you’re getting beauty,” said Alawi.







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Major companies in Bahrain respond to government's clean-up call in labor camps
Bahrain sets up coronavirus ICU in military hospital car park