

Gunman shoots nine people dead in Lebanese village of Baakline

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Associated Press

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BEIRUT: A gunman shot dead nine people Tuesday, including five Syrians, and left their bodies in several locations in a mountain village southeast of the capital Beirut, the prime minister and state news and said.

A motive for the killings was not immediately known, said the state-run National News Agency. It said the shooter fled to nearby fields and was being chased by security forces.

Such shootings in Lebanon, where many people keep rifles or pistols in their homes, are rare. Lebanon is home to more than a million Syrian refugees and other Syrians who are residents.

NNA said a pump action rifle and a Kalashnikov assault rifle were used in the shootings.

Prime Minister Hassan Diab "denounced the horrific crime," his office said in a statement. The prime minister called on security agencies and judicial authorities to accelerate the investigation to disclose its circumstances and identify the perpetrators.

The dead included five Syrians and four Lebanese whose bodies were left behind at several locations in Baakline, local LBC TV reported.

"It is similar to the shootings that happen in America," Marwan Hamadeh, a member of parliament from Baakline, told reporters in Beirut. He urged security forces to detain the shooter, saying "there are some indications that he might be a mentally unstable person."

Baakline's mayor, Abdullah al-Ghoseini, told the daily An-Nahar newspaper the motive behind the shooting was unclear, adding that it took place in an area that includes housing units for Syrian workers.

Al-Ghoseini later told LBC the shooting started at 3:30 p.m. (1230 GMT) and search operations for the shooter were still ongoing five hours later. He added that the Syrians who were killed had been living in the village for nearly 10 years.

The shooting comes as Lebanon experiences its worst economic and financial crisis in decades. A crash in the value of the local currency against the U.S. dollar has led to a sharp increase in prices.

Anti-government protests resumed Tuesday calling on the Cabinet to work on improving living conditions in the nearly bankrupt country.



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[Shooting](#)

Canada's worst mass shooting leaves at least 18 dead
Christchurch attack survivor says shooting 'damaged him for life'

[Syrian war monitor says Israeli strike near Palmyra kills 9](#)

Author:

Associated Press

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1587476710996646100

Tue, 2020-04-21 13:39

BEIRUT: An Israeli airstrike in central Syria killed nine fighters, including

six who were not Syrians and some who were loyal to the militant Hezbollah group, an opposition war monitor said Tuesday.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights gave no nationalities for the foreigners who were killed on a military post in the desert near the historic central town of Palmyra. It said the dead included some fighters loyal to Lebanon's Hezbollah group.

Israel says it has been behind a series of airstrikes mainly targeting Iranian and Hezbollah forces in Syria that have joined the country's war fighting alongside the government. It rarely confirms the attacks and did not comment on Monday's airstrike.

Syrian state TV reported the country's air defenses shot down several missiles launched by Israeli warplanes Monday night. The station gave no further details about the attack, the latest of several to hit central Syria in the past three weeks.

The Observatory said late Monday the Israeli strikes targeted Iranian and Iran-backed fighters in the desert near Palmyra. It added that Israeli warplanes were also flying over neighboring Lebanon.

The strikes came hours after Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif was in the Syrian capital Damascus, where he met with President Bashar Assad and his Syrian counterpart.



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Israel accuses Hezbollah of “provocative” activity Wearing face masks, Syria’s Assad and Iran’s Zarif condemn West at Damascus meeting

[At least seven dead, 85 injured in Yemen flash floods](#)

Author:

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Tue, 2020-04-21 12:46

SANAA: At least seven people have been killed and 85 injured in flash flooding in Yemen this month, the UN said Tuesday, as the coronavirus threat also looms over the war-torn nation.

Yemen announced its first case of COVID-19 on April 10, and aid organizations have warned that its health system – all but collapsed since a conflict between the internationally-recognized government and the Houthi militia broke out in 2014 – is ill equipped to handle the crisis.

“Heavy rains and flooding across northern governorates, including Marib, in mid-April led to casualties and damaged property and sites for internally displaced persons,” the UN humanitarian coordination agency OCHA said.

“Initial information indicated that seven people – five women and two children – were killed in the flooding and another 85 people were injured, including seven who were seriously injured and hospitalized.”

The Houthi-held capital Sanaa and districts in the same governorate “have been badly affected,” it added.

Storms also hit other provinces, including Ibb, Hajjah and Marib – which is the government’s last northern stronghold and currently the conflict’s “center of gravity.”

The UN special envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, said last week that progress was being made toward a cease-fire after calls for a pause to face the coronavirus threat.

An estimated 24 million Yemenis – more than 80 percent of the population – depend on some form of humanitarian or protection assistance for survival, according to the UN.

More than three million people are displaced, many in camps that are especially vulnerable to disease.



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Iran floods leave 21 dead
Deadly floods drown pending fears of coronavirus in Yemen's Aden

[Egypt reveals archaeological discovery online](#)

Author:

Tue, 2020-04-21 00:51

CAIRO: Egypt's Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities has revealed a new archaeological discovery to the world – announced online as part of the state's measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

The discovery, posted on the ministry's official web page and social media networks, was at the sacred animal necropolis in Saqqara where there have been two other archaeological discoveries during the past two years. The most important of these were the gorgeously decorated tomb of Wahti and a cachette

of sacred birds and animals from which many animal mummies – some extremely rare – were brought to light.

According to the Ministry of Antiquities, the latest discovery was at the bottom of a 11-meter-deep shaft. Five sealed stone coffins/sarcophagi were found, and four niches in a room containing wooden coffins and late-era human burials.

HIGHLIGHTS

•The discovery, posted on the ministry's official web page and social media networks, was at the sacred animal necropolis in Saqqara where there have been two other archaeological discoveries during the past two years.

•The most important of these were the gorgeously decorated tomb of Wahti and a cachette of sacred birds and animals from which many animal mummies – some extremely rare – were brought to light.

A massive anthropoid wooden coffin with hieroglyphs written in yellow pigment was discovered in one niche. "We found several other artifacts around the coffin," the ministry said. "They included 365 faience Ushabti figurines, some of which bear hieroglyphs texts; a small wooden obelisk about 40 cm tall, all four of its sides bearing painted scenes depicting the deities Isis and Nephthys, and the deity Horus; wooden statues of the god Ptah-Sokar-Osiris; and three pottery canopic jars in which the viscera removed during mummification was kept, in addition to many other artifacts."

Archaeological expert Abdel-Rahman Rihan said the latest discovery was at a site where work had been underway for more than three months.

Rihan said that the find dated to the late Pharaonic kingdom following the third transitional era and prior to the Ptolemaic Era, dating back to 332 B.C.

Egyptian archaeologists do not all agree on the beginning of the late era. However, they do agree that it was around the late 25th Dynasty and before or during the 26th Dynasty.

The 25th Dynasty rulers were from Sudan, particularly Sudan's northern area of Nabta, which was the capital of the kingdom of Kush in ancient times. The region is about 300 km from the capital Khartoum.

FASTFACT

A massive anthropoid wooden coffin with hieroglyphs written in yellow pigment was discovered. Several other artifacts around the coffin were also found.

"The discovery is certainly very important as it coincides with the expected inauguration of the Grand Egyptian Museum, which is at the top of the Egyptian state's priorities after the coronavirus pandemic is over," Rihan said. The ministry was using technology to introduce its archaeological discoveries to the world, and these would be "awaiting visitors" after the

pandemic ended, he said.

During the past few years, the ministry has been focusing on improving services for visitors, especially at museums and archaeological sites. "We have a plan to develop services in the pyramids area, which was very difficult to visit," Rihan said. "However now the venue is being provided with all that tourists need, such as cafeterias, eco-friendly and safe transportation, bathrooms and other amenities."

Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Khaled El-Anany said that his department was working on developing a guideline for visitors that would be unveiled when the coronavirus crisis ended.

"There will be a high level of hygiene in restaurants and hotels, and sanitization will be carried out differently," El-Anany said. "The entire world has learned a lot from this crisis and we will emerge stronger after we overcome it."





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Egypt archaeologists clash over King Tut tomb theory
Egypt archaeologists find ancient writer's tomb

Houthis release abducted former Yemeni culture minister

Author:

Tue, 2020-04-21 00:47

AL-MUKALLA: The Iran-backed Houthi militia released Khaled Al-Ruwaishan, a former Yemeni culture minister and an outspoken writer, following a tribal mediation and public pressure, relatives and local media outlets said on Monday.

The Houthis came under huge local and international pressure after heavily armed gunmen stormed the house of the former minister and snatched him along on Sunday in the capital Sana'a. Abdul Qawi Al-Ruwaishan, a friend of Al-Ruwaishan, said that dozens of Houthis had besieged the former minister's house before smashing down the doors.

Local media said that powerful tribal leaders from Khawlan, Al-Ruwaishan's tribe, mediated his release without giving further information.

Yemen observers have linked the abduction to Al-Ruwaishan's most recent Facebook posts, in which he harshly criticized the Houthi handling of damage caused by heavy rains in areas under their control, and praising their opponents in Marib.

Since taking over power in late 2014, the Houthis have abducted hundreds of their opponents including journalists, politicians and activists, and forced hundreds of others into decamping to government-controlled areas or going into exile.

Abdullah Al-Mansouri, a brother of Tawfeq Al-Mansouri, one of four Yemeni journalists who were sentenced to death by a Houthi court early this month, called upon local and international rights groups to exert more pressure on Houthis until they released his brother and other detainees.

"The pressure that led to the release of Al-Ruwaishan and Al-Jubaihi must be maintained on the Houthis," Al-Mansouri told Arab News, referring to Yahya Al-Jubaihi, another Yemeni journalist who was sentenced to death by the Houthis in April 2017 and was released five months later following international uproar.

BACKGROUND

Since taking over power in late 2014, the Houthis have abducted hundreds of their opponents including journalists, politicians and activists, and forced hundreds of others into decamping to government-controlled areas or going into exile.

In the Red Sea town of Mocha, hundreds of government officials, army officers and soldiers and social dignitaries attended the funeral of Col. Mohammed Al-

Sulaihi on Sunday, a government liaison officer who was shot by a Houthi sniper in Hodeidah.

Mourners carried Al-Sulaihi's coffin, wrapped in the Yemeni flag, to his home village in Taiz for burial. Al-Sulaihi died on Friday at a local hospital in the southern port city of Aden after sustaining critical wounds from the attack last month.

After mourning Al-Sulaihi's death, Yemen's Minister for Foreign Affairs Mohammed Al-Hadrami demanded UN monitors in Hodeidah move their headquarter from the Houthi controlled city to a neutral area, and to suspend their operation until the killers were brought to justice. "This is proof that the militias cannot be trusted," Al-Hadrami said on Twitter.

On the ground, fighting intensified between government forces and rebel fighters in the southern province of Dhale, where loyalists seized control of several villages, state media said on Monday.



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Houthis slammed for abducting former Yemeni culture minister
Shot by Houthis, Yemeni government liaison officer in Hodeida dies