

# 'Corona' dates invade Egypt markets

Author:

Wed, 2020-04-15 22:28

CAIRO: Egyptians are known for giving new names to different types of dates. During the past two years, dates known as Mohamed Salah, named after the Egyptian football star playing for Liverpool, have cropped up.

This year is no different. One kind of date, the Corona, is now available in the market for 25 Egyptian pounds a kilogram (\$1.58).

"We are used to giving various types of dates new names every year," said Ahmed Amin, a merchant in a wholesale market in Moqattam.

"The names are usually trendy. One year, (Mohamed) Aboutrika, Egypt's former football superstar, was trending. Aboutrika dates were the most expensive," he said. "Other years, Egyptian actor Mohamed Ramadan was trending. Other times there was belly dancer Sofinar and pop star Shakira."

Amin said that merchants have also named their dates after the Egyptian actress Laila Elwy and El-Shabah (the ghost), as well as giving other names which dealers believe attract a large number of customers.

Amin said that the Corona was the most significant name to date because of the coronavirus, not only in Egypt but also across the world.

He laughed when he said that customers were buying the Corona dates in bulk, pointing out that customers are amused, too, when they buy them.

Mohamed Kamal, manager of a market affiliated to the state-owned Al-Ahram Consumer Complexes Company, said: "Huge amounts of Ramadan dates are now on the shelves while other large amounts remain in storage."

He said that 200 kilos of dry dates are available in markets at prices ranging from 11 to 16 Egyptian pounds.

"Another fine type of dry dates costs 26 pounds per kilo. As for half dried dates, they are sold in 700 gram packages for 15 pounds and 400 gram packages for 30 pounds."

Kamal called the half-dried dates "best-sellers."

In the run-up to Ramadan, the Chamber of Commerce in Cairo published a list of prices for dates. But Kamal said the list showed much disparity in the cost of dates. Ebrimi dates ranged from 12 to 22 pounds per kilo. The price of Syrian dates ranged from 6 to 16 pounds a kilo.

White Ghazal dates reached between 11 to 23 pounds a kilo. Merkaby dates were going for from 6 to 18 pounds. Ayanat dates were between 11 to 23 pounds. Alban dates ranged from 12 to 24 pounds. Wards dates recorded 11 to 25 pounds. Bertmoda dates were between 15 to 25 pounds. Skouti dates registered

between 15 to 25 pounds. Aswani dates stood at 6 to 16 pounds. El-Gondeila dates were 15 to 25 pounds. And Qarn El-Ghazal dates were being sold at between 20 to 35 pounds per kilo.

Despite the “Corona” dates tag, market merchants have also introduced the slogan “No Corona among us,” fighting the virus by wearing gloves and face masks, while attempting to maintain social distancing and avoiding crowds. They underlined their determination to remain open in order to make a steady income.

And they added one more refrain: “Ramadan is incomplete without dates.”



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Egypt's Grand Mufti slams refusal to bury dead COVID-19 patients as 'religiously rejected' Egypt expects tourism revenues to drop by \$5 billion due to coronavirus

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[Cairo shootout exploits coronavirus](#)

# crisis

Author:

Wed, 2020-04-15 20:46

CAIRO: A shootout in El-Amireya neighborhood east of Cairo on Tuesday between police forces and a terrorist cell ended with the death of seven terrorists and one police officer.

The gunfight seems to be part of growing signs that terrorism is on the rise in Egypt.

The first indication of such an increase, according to security expert Hisham Belal, is the timing of the attacks. The Interior Ministry said in a statement that the terrorists were planning to attack during the Christian Coptic holiday celebrations in Egypt, adding that they had procured the necessary weapons. The Interior Ministry added that the terrorist cell used several places to hide in east and south Cairo where these venues were used as a launching pad to carry out their operations, coinciding with the Christian holiday.

“The terrorists were planning to exploit the coronavirus crisis, thus signifying that they are mean and vile people who hide behind the veil of religion while they know nothing about religion,” Belal said.

However, Belal added that Egyptian police are on high alert “despite the pandemic we are passing through.” Quick action by national security officers contributed to squashing the operations, he said.

The Interior Ministry statement said that the national security sector detected elements of the cell and dealt with them decisively, which resulted in the killing of seven terrorists who were found possessing six rifles, four cartridge guns, and huge amounts of explosives and various types of gunfire.

The statement added that “at a time when the state with all its institutions is battling the coronavirus, it continues to fight terrorism and terrorists who thought that this crisis could help them carry out their criminal acts.”

Egyptian Coptic activist and intellectual, Rober El-Fares, points to other indications that terrorism has recently re-emerged in the country, saying terrorists had returned to target Copts, “something they had stopped in recent years after the terrorist Muslim Brotherhood was toppled in Egypt.”

“They started planning following the dispersal of the Rabaa El-Adaweya sit-in in 2013, when they began attacking churches and monasteries,” El-Fares said. “That same year, they attacked Copts during a wedding in Al-Athraa Church in Cairo’s El-Warraaq neighborhood.” Four people, including two girls aged eight and 12, were shot dead, and at least another 18 were injured.

“They continued their attacks by killing priests in northern Sinai, when Daesh slaughtered 21 Copts in Libya (in 2017), in addition to the terrorist attack in December 2016 on St. Peter’s Church in which 29 worshippers were

killed.”

For years, Egypt has been battling a low-level terrorist insurgency in the Sinai Peninsula, which at times has spilt over into the country’s major cities.

In April 2017, two attacks were launched during the Palm Sunday mass. The first was in Margerges Church in the city of Tanta, in the Gharbeya governorate. Hours later, a second explosion ripped through Alexandria’s Cathedral. At least 45 people were reported killed and 126 injured in the two suicide bombings.

Terrorists also attacked a bus transporting Christians in May 2017 in Minya governorate, killing 29 people.

Five people, including a Muslim police officer guarding Marmina Church in Helwan in southern Cairo in December 2017, were killed.

In 2018, terrorists targeted a bus transporting Copts on the road to Saint Samuel Monastery on Al-Qalmoun Mountain in Minya, killing seven Egyptians.

Former assistant to the interior minister, Farouk El-Meqrahy, underlined the importance of pre-emptive strikes as part of several police raids against terrorists with the aim of maintaining the safety and security of the nation.

He said such repeated pre-emptive security strikes against terrorists had led to a decline in terrorist attacks during the past two years.

Member of Parliament Abdel-Hady El-Qasaby described to Arab News the strong bond between police and the public in the fight against terrorism. In the El-Amireya gun battle, police officers called on residents to stay away from the windows of their homes and from building entrances to avoid being struck by stray bullets.

“Residents responded to the calls of the police,” El-Qasaby said. He added that many residents wanted to take part in the battle.

Meanwhile, several MPs hailed the police actions in dealing with the terrorists. El-Qasaby underlined the country’s “huge appreciation” of “martyrs who die while defending the nation.”

Minutes after the El-Amireya battle ended, the name of the policeman who died during the confrontation, national security officer, Mohamed El-Houfy, went viral on social media.

“It was an appreciation of anyone who carries out his duty in serving the nation regardless of his job or position,” El-Qasaby said.

El-Qasaby compared the heroism shown by the police with a mob in the village of Shobra El-Bahow, which recently refused to allow the burial of a doctor who had died of the coronavirus for fear of becoming infected.

Said El-Qasaby: “It is a deviant attitude among Egyptians who appreciate the



sacrifices of their people.”



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## [Amnesty slams Qatar's expulsion of migrant workers during coronavirus pandemic](#)

Wed, 2020-04-15 20:18

LONDON: Qatari authorities rounded up and expelled dozens of migrant workers after telling them they were being taken to be tested for coronavirus, Amnesty International said in a report published on Wednesday.

The report details the “inhumane” treatment of hundreds of men from Nepal who were apprehended by Qatari police in March.

Amnesty interviewed 20 of the men, who said police had told them they were going to be tested for the virus and would be returned to their accommodation afterward.

Instead, they were taken to detention centers, held in “appalling” conditions for several days, and then sent to Nepal.

One of the men detained in Doha told Amnesty: “We were asked to stop to test for the virus. Police told us that the doctor would come and check the virus. But they lied to us.”

Out of the 20 interviewed, only three said they had their temperature checked while in the detention facility.

“None of the men we spoke to had received any explanation for why they were treated this way, nor were they able to challenge their detention or expulsion,” said Steve Cockburn, Amnesty’s deputy director of global issues.

“After spending days in inhumane detention conditions, many were not even given the chance to collect their belongings before they were put on planes to Nepal,” he added.

“It is disturbing that the Qatari authorities appear to have used the pandemic as a smokescreen for further abuses against migrant workers.”

All the workers left Qatar without receiving their salaries or end-of-service benefits owed to them.

One man was given cash by his company while in detention, but a police officer took it for “safekeeping” and failed to return it.

In response to Amnesty’s report, the Qatari government claimed that “officials uncovered individuals engaged in illegal and illicit activity,” and accused the migrants of the “sale of dangerous food goods.”

But none of the men were ever told directly of any such charges, and documents given to the men and reviewed by Amnesty do not suggest that they were ever charged with any criminal offense.

Amnesty’s report is the latest of many issued by global rights groups expressing concern over Qatar’s treatment of the thousands of migrant workers who live and work in the country.



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## [Egyptian police officer killed during fire exchange with 'terrorist group'](#)

Tue, 2020-04-14 22:04

CAIRO: A police officer was killed during a raid by Egyptian security forces at which they exchanged fire with a "terrorist group" at Cairo's El-Amiriya neighborhood, state television reported Tuesday.

A police officer from Egypt's National Security Agency has been reportedly killed during the shootout.



Egyptian forces said that they raided a terrorist hideout in the district, and have killed all of its elements.

Police have warned residents of the neighborhood to keep their windows closed and to seek safety indoors.

Private television stations broadcast what they called footage of the shooting. Gun shots were heard and the neighborhood was seen in complete darkness, in what appeared to be a power cut.

“Initial investigations show that the suspects were planning to carry out terrorist acts,” said one of the security sources, who spoke to one of the channels.

Explosives and weapons were found with the suspects, the security source added.

The Egyptian public prosecutor has ordered an investigation into the incident.

Egypt has imposed a nighttime curfew in efforts to limit the spread of coronavirus.



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## Vessel boarded by armed men in Gulf of Oman released – UKMT0

Tue, 2020-04-14 20:25

DUBAI: A vessel that was boarded by armed men at anchor in the Gulf of Oman on Tuesday has been released, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMT0) said.

“Vessel and crew are safe,” it said in an updated advisory, urging all vessels in the vicinity to remain vigilant.

UKMT0 had earlier said the vessel had been at anchor around three nautical miles (nm) off Ras Al Kuh.

Maritime security firm Dryad Global separately tweeted that a Hong Kong-flagged vessel had been released. It earlier said the ship had been at anchor waiting to approach Jubail in Saudi Arabia.

“At 12:48 UTC the vessel was shown to be underway towards the Iranian coastline. At 14:28UTC the vessel was shown to be stationary at a position 4nm off Mogh-e Qanbareh-ye Kuh Mobarak,” Dryad’s report said.

It said the vessel was “highly likely to be the vessel of concern”, but added that it was “unclear whether the vessel is in distress or is being assisted by Iran in some way”.

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CHINA-FLAGGED TANKER “SC TAIPEI” (IMO 9175535, 22,377 DWT)  
PURPORTEDLY FELL UNDER ARMED ATTACK IN GULF OF OMAN AT 12:48 UTC BY  
IRANIAN NAVY / IRGC. VESSEL WAS SAILING TO JUBAIL, SAUDI ARABIA.  
NOW OFF IRANIAN COAST. VIA [@GlobalDryad](#) [pic.twitter.com/FZPGn5ESVJ](https://pic.twitter.com/FZPGn5ESVJ)

– TankerTrackers.com, Inc. (@TankerTrackers) [April 14, 2020](#)



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