

[Houthi militia breach cease-fire 241 times – Arab coalition](#)

Sun, 2020-04-12 21:49

RIYADH: The Houthi militia has breached a cease-fire 241 times since its implementation, the Arab coalition fighting to restore the internationally-recognized government in Yemen said.

The Arab coalition announced a two-week cease-fire on April 9, in an effort to combat the coronavirus outbreak.

The coalition added that the Iran-backed Houthi militia's violations included the use of ballistic missiles and heavy weapons

"The coalition is committed to the Yemeni National Army and to a comprehensive cease-fire," it said.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Yemen](#)

[Houthis](#)

[Arab Coalition](#)

[Cease-fire](#)

War-ravaged Yemen moves to stem spread of virus
Yemen confirms first coronavirus case

Turkey's interior minister says resigns over short-notice coronavirus curfew

Sun, 2020-04-12 21:43

ISTANBUL: Turkey's Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu said on Twitter on Sunday that he was resigning from his post over the implementation of a two-day curfew in major Turkish cities to tackle the coronavirus outbreak.

Turkey announced the weekend lockdown late on Friday, but in the brief time before it went into effect many people rushed out to buy food and drink in the country's commercial hub Istanbul, a city of 16 million people, and other cities.

"Although in a limited period of time, the incidents that occurred ahead of the implementation of the curfew was not befitting with the perfect management of the outbreak process," Soylu said in his statement.

The lockdown decision was taken with good intention and aimed at slowing the spread of coronavirus, he said. The lockdown will end at 2100 GMT on Sunday. Turkey's death toll from COVID-19 has risen above 1,100, with more than 50,000 confirmed cases since first patient diagnosed a little over a month ago.

If his resignation is accepted by President Tayyip Erdogan, Soylu would be the second Turkish minister to leave his post since the coronavirus pandemic struck.

Transport minister Mehmet Cahit Turhan was removed two weeks ago after the ministry drew criticism for holding a tender amid the outbreak to prepare to build a huge canal on the edge of Istanbul.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Coronavirus](#)

[Turkey](#)

[Suleyman Soylu](#)

Turkey hospital sees hope as 93-year-old virus patient discharged Turkey tightens control on social media platforms

[Son of Egyptian coronavirus victim doctor recalls terror of mob attack](#)

Sun, 2020-04-12 20:12

CAIRO: The burial of an Egyptian doctor who died from coronavirus was delayed by residents trying to prevent her funeral from taking place in the village's cemetery, fearing the spread of the virus, her son has told Arab News.

Security forces managed to disperse angry crowds in the village in Dakahlia governorate, north of Cairo, before the doctor, Sonia Abdel-Azim, was buried.

The incident reflects a worrying trend of some Egyptians changing their

perception of doctors, from heroes to carriers of the virus.

Dr. Ahmed Al-Hindawi, Abdel-Azim's son, told Arab News that a mob had gathered around the road leading to the grave site to prevent the ambulance from reaching the cemetery. Ambulance windows were smashed by rocks thrown by crowds, forcing the procession to wait for police and the governorate's security director to arrive.

Al-Hindawi said negotiations with villagers in order to bury his mother continued for a full five hours. He said he failed to reach an agreement, despite the fact that the washing, shrouding and burial ceremonies had been carried out in accordance with the Ministry of Health's medical standards.

He said his mother was diabetic and had had problems with her foot, which had been operated on for gangrene. He said his mother was in intensive care, then went to Al-Sadr Hospital when her health deteriorated. She later tested positive for coronavirus.

There have been other incidents of hostility toward healthcare workers in Egypt since the outbreak.

Dr. Dina Magdy, who works in Ismailia's Fever Hospital, had to move to a new residence, which was relatively isolated, as a precaution. Even so, crowds demanded she be kicked out of her house, claiming she was infected with coronavirus.

Magdy said she was harassed by residents who accused her of transmitting the disease to them. She said in a video that was posted on social media that residents claimed they were in possession of a report stating she was infected, prompting her to call police.

On Friday the people of Bolus village in Kafr El-Dawwar, Beheira governorate, refused to bury the mother of a doctor who died from the coronavirus after contracting the disease from her son. Security forces intervened, clashing with villagers in a dawn confrontation.

In another incident a nurse at Al-Sadr Hospital, also in Dakahlia, was bullied after she became infected. She said she cried when her phone number and those of her colleagues were posted on social media. She added she had received calls accusing her of being the source of the pandemic and the reason for its spread.

"We are sick and in agony, and suffering from a bad psychological state," the nurse said in a video circulated among Facebook users.

"People are supposed to thank and appreciate doctors fighting the coronavirus because they are risking their lives on a regular basis," chest diseases consultant and president of the Egyptian Society for Allergy and Immunology Dr. Nabil Al-Dabaraki told Arab News.

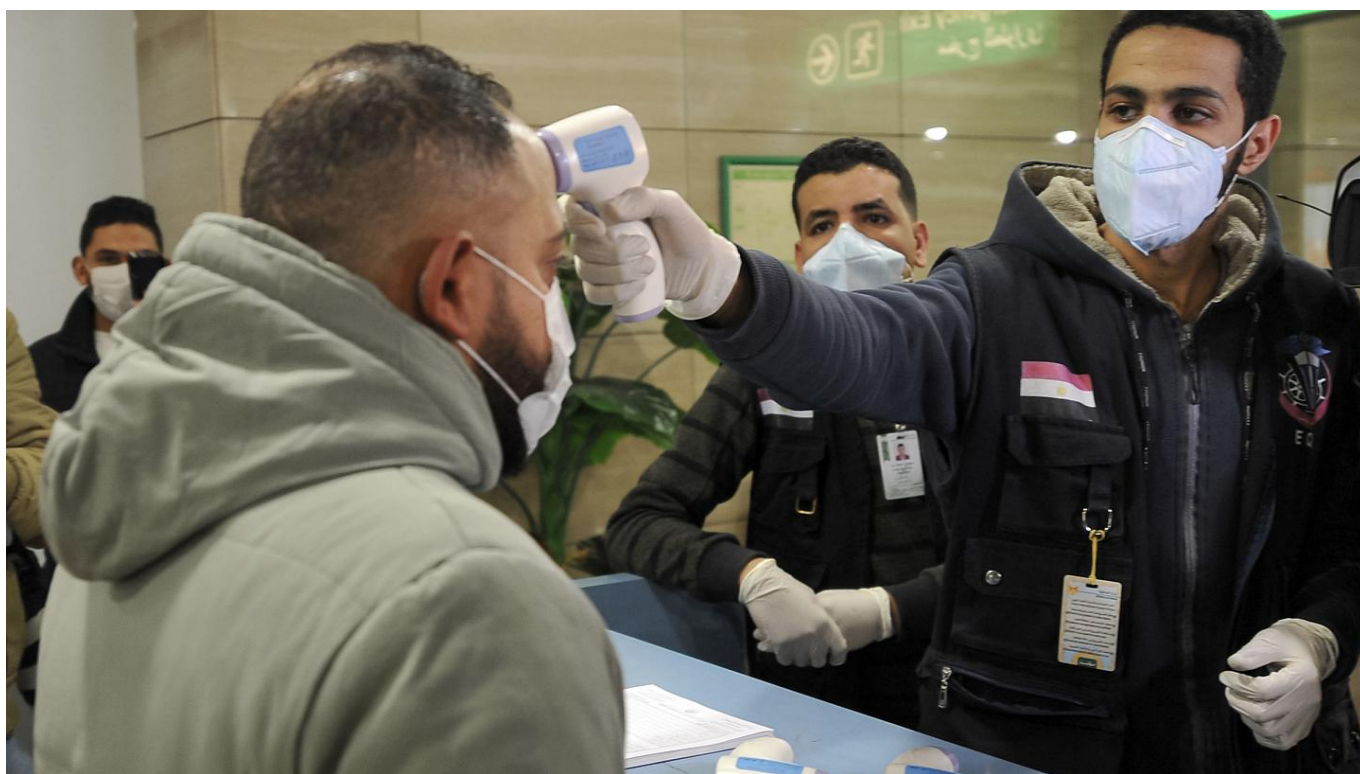
Al-Dabaraki said different cultures and the low level of awareness among some people could be blamed for the harassment doctors were facing.

He said it indicated ignorance and shortsightedness by some because the causes of the infection were well known and could not be measured in that way.

“What happened with some doctors is unacceptable, but they are isolated actions, because the majority of citizens appreciate the effort that doctors are making,” Secretary-General of the Medical Union Ehab Al-TaHER told Arab News.

The General Union of Egyptian Physicians had initially monitored the death of three doctors and the infection of 43 others, and indicated that the number of patients would increase.

By Saturday, Egypt had registered 1,939 coronavirus cases and 146 deaths.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Egypt](#)

[Coronavirus](#)

Egypt's Grand Mufti slams refusal to bury dead COVID-19 patients as 'religiously rejected'

[Iran begins lifting restrictions after](#)

virus lockdown

Author:

Sun, 2020-04-12 00:32

TEHRAN, DUBAI: Iran began reopening government offices on Saturday after a brief nationwide lockdown to help contain the worst coronavirus outbreak in the Middle East, which has killed more than 4,300 people in the country. Authorities had ordered most government agencies and all nonessential businesses to remain closed for a week after the Nowruz holiday ended on April 4.

President Hassan Rouhani urged Iranian to respect health protocols to guard against the virus.

"Easing restrictions does not mean ignoring health protocols ... social distancing and other health protocols should be respected seriously by people," Rouhani was quoted as saying.

Government offices outside Iran's capital, Tehran, reopened on Saturday with a third of all employees working from home, state media reported. Women who have young children were given priority in deciding who works remotely. Businesses outside the capital were also allowed to reopen.

Businesses in Tehran will be allowed to reopen next Saturday, provided they register with authorities and follow guidelines on social distancing set out by the Health Ministry. Government offices in the capital will reopen with two-thirds of employees coming in.

The Health Ministry, meanwhile, reported another 125 deaths, bringing the overall toll to 4,357. Iran has reported more than 70,000 confirmed cases, and authorities say more than 40,000 have recovered.

For weeks, Iran declined to impose the kind of wide-scale lockdowns adopted by other Middle Eastern countries, even as the number of confirmed cases and fatalities steadily climbed. The virus has also infected and killed a number of senior Iranian officials.

Authorities have defended their response, saying they have to consider the economic impact of any quarantine measures since the country is under severe U.S. sanctions.

In a separate development, Iran executed one of the alleged ringleaders of a prison break last month, the state-run IRNA news agency reported. It said Mostafa Salimi had been on death row for killing two policemen during a prison riot in 2004.

Around 70 convicts escaped from a prison in the western city of Saqqez on March 27 after fighting with the guards. Iran has temporarily released around 90,000 prisoners, but those held in Saqqez were not among them.

IRNA quoted a local prosecutor as saying authorities had arrested 65 of the escaped prisoners and were still searching for the other nine.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Coronavirus](#)

Lebanon scrambles to fight pandemic, as cases reach 619
War-ravaged Yemen moves to stem spread of virus

[War-ravaged Yemen moves to stem spread of virus](#)

Author:

Sun, 2020-04-12 00:27

AL-MUKALLA: Authorities in the southeastern Yemeni province of Hadramout have scrambled to contain the spread of coronavirus in the port city of Al-Sheher by imposing further measures, government officials and residents said Saturday.

Yemen announced its coronavirus patient zero on Friday in Al-Sheher. Health officials told Arab News that he worked at the city's seaport and might have contracted the virus after coming into contact with foreign sailors.

The patient developed symptoms after staying for one week at the city's hospital. Local authorities locked the seaport and gave workers two weeks' leave. The seaport and neighboring areas are being disinfected.

A curfew from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. was imposed in all cities of the province as health workers recorded the names of those who had come into contact with the

patient.

Hadramout Gov. Maj. Gen. Faraj Salmen Al-Bahsani urged residents to comply with the measures and stay indoors as much as they could.

"In this difficult time, our most important weapon is harmony, cooperation and helping each other. We will confront those difficulties and we will win," the governor said in a televised speech on Friday. "I urge those who met that person to see our health teams for their safety. This will help us contain the pandemic."

Health authorities believe that the man mixed directly with at least 19 people, including some health workers, and that at least 300 came into contact with his relatives and friends.

"We isolated doctors and health workers who treated the man inside Al-Tayser Hospital in Al-Sheher," a senior health official told Arab News on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to reporters. "We have also increased the number of health teams to trace the people who came into contact with the man." He added that military vehicles and soldiers were deployed outside the man's family home and the homes of his relatives after some of them refused to stay indoors.

A lockdown in Yemen was introduced last month but local authorities in Hadramout said they were forced into easing it to allay people's fears, after receiving information that the measures had caused psychological problems.

"The lockdown caused great panic in the city and some hospitals received patients suffering from psychological problems. So we eased the restrictions during the day," a health official said.

An awareness campaign was launched in the city to educate people about how to prevent the spread of the disease as teams searched for suspected cases. Cars with loudspeakers roamed around the city telling people about the importance of social distancing, washing hands and other guidelines.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Yemen announced its coronavirus patient zero on Friday in Al-Sheher.**
- **The patient worked at the city's seaport and might have contracted the virus after coming into contact with foreign sailors.**

Saeed Al-Moulem, from the Ministry of Health's office in Al-Sheher, said life had returned to normal on Saturday. People had reopened their businesses as vehicles were seen leaving and crossing into the city.

"Life is normal today," Al-Moulem told Arab News. "Markets are bustling with people. Yes, the news of the coronavirus case caused a brief shock as people did not expect to find the first case in their city."

But some residents blasted local authorities for easing the lockdown, expressing concerns that the disease would spread rapidly if people were allowed to move freely.

"I am really surprised to see people moving again," Ahmad, who preferred to be identified by his first name, told Arab News by phone. "They should have closed the city for 24 hours for two or three days. Everywhere in the world when the first case is detected, the state closes the infected area for

several days. Here people are roaming freely as if nothing has happened,” he said, adding that he was forced into isolating one of his relatives at home because he was at the hospital where the first case of coronavirus was discovered.

Unabated fighting The first case of coronavirus in Yemen did not lead to a halt in fighting on raging battlefields in the country’s north as many local and international health officials had demanded.

Last week the Yemeni government welcomed the Arab coalition’s declaration of a truce in Yemen to allow health workers to fight the coronavirus pandemic. Col. Rabia Al-Qurashi, the army’s spokesman in Al-Jawf, said Houthis had launched two simultaneous attacks on two military bases controlled by government forces in the northern province.

“They keep breaching the truce,” he told Arab News. “We pushed back two Houthi attacks on Al-Khanjar and Labenat military bases in Al-Jawf.”



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Coronavirus](#)

Yemen’s Houthis sentence 4 reporters to death
Yemen confirms first coronavirus case