

# US will designate head of Daesh as a global terrorist – Secretary of State Pompeo

Tue, 2020-03-17 20:29

The United States said on Tuesday it will designate the head of Daesh as a global terrorist and it will impose sanctions on Syrian Defense Minister Ali Abdullah Ayyoub for perpetuating violence inside Syria.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo also said that the US continues to call on Iran to immediately release all wrongfully detained Americans held there and announced Washington will impose sanctions on nine entities in South Africa and China for aiding Iran.

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Pompeo to Iraq PM: US will take action in self-defense if attacked  
Pompeo says Iran must be held accountable on nuclear commitments

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## British-Iranian woman Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe temporarily released from Tehran jail

Tue, 2020-03-17 19:54

LONDON: British-Iranian dual national Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe has been temporarily released from prison in Iran as it struggles to contain the spread of coronavirus.

Zaghari-Ratcliffe, 42, was part of a temporary release of 85,000 prisoners. She has been in prison since April 2016, and was sentenced in September that year to five years' imprisonment for allegedly "plotting to topple the Iranian government." She has vehemently denied all charges.

UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said: "I am relieved that Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe was today (Tuesday) temporarily released into the care of her family in Iran. We urge the regime to ensure she receives any necessary medical care."

He added: "While this is a welcome step, we urge the government now to release all UK dual nationals arbitrarily detained in Iran, and enable them to return to their families in the UK."

There are many other Britons and dual nationals detained in Iran on charges of spying or plotting against the regime.

Many have recently detailed the extent of sickness in Iranian jails, especially in the notorious Evin prison.

Last week, British-Iranian political prisoner Anoosheh Ashoori sent a recorded message to his wife saying his jail was in chaos because of the virus. He appealed to the UK government to do more to help secure his temporary release.

Ashoori, 65, was moved to a different ward as coronavirus allegedly spread among his inmates.

Zaghari-Ratcliffe's release has been a major campaign effort for the British government, with several foreign secretaries calling for her freedom.

Soon after the news of her release was published, Zaghari-Ratcliffe was photographed smiling with a tracking device attached to her ankle.

She is permitted to remain within 300 meters of her family's home during the temporary release.



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Jailed UK-Iranian Zaghari-Ratcliffe is 'chess piece': husband  
Husband says Zaghari-Ratcliffe ends hunger strike in Iran

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## [Libyan truce would aid war on coronavirus, say western, Arab nations](#)

Author:

Reuters

ID:

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Tue, 2020-03-17 14:26

TUNIS: Western and Arab countries in a statement on Tuesday urged Libya's warring factions to stop fighting to allow the country's authorities to respond to the threat posed by the coronavirus.

Although Libya has yet to record any confirmed cases, the World Health Organization representative in Tripoli has warned of the great risks faced if

the virus spreads in a country fragmented by conflict. For the last year, the eastern-based Libyan National Army under Khalifa Haftar has been waging a military campaign to capture Tripoli, seat of the internationally recognized Government of National Accord. In recent weeks numerous rounds of bombardment have targeted GNA-held areas around Tripoli including around its last functioning airport. In response to the coronavirus pandemic, both the Tripoli and Benghazi administrations have pledged money to local health services and closed ports and airports. A joint statement on Tuesday from Algeria, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, the United States, the European Union, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates said a truce would help efforts to tackle the virus. "We strongly support the efforts of Libyan health authorities across the country as they come together in a spirit of national cohesion and urge them to take all necessary measures to support the health and well-being of all Libyans," the statement said. "A truce would also enable combatants to return home to provide care for relatives who may be at higher risk," it added.



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US heart surgeon treats children lacking care in Libya's war  
Iran temporarily frees 85,000 prisoners amid coronavirus

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# [UAE suspends prayer in all places of worship for four weeks](#)

Author:

Mon, 2020-03-16 20:22

DUBAI: The UAE has decided to suspend prayers in all houses of worship across the country starting Monday for a period of four weeks as part of measures to confront coronavirus.

The National Emergency Crisis and Disaster Management Authority has made the decision together with the Authority of Islamic Affairs and Endowments, and religious and health bodies.

It said the decision to suspend prayers in mosques and churches and their facilities will be reviewed four weeks from now, a statement on state-run news agency WAM read.

The step is part of the nation's precautionary measures to ensure the safety of people and avoid the spread of COVID-19.



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Egypt to halt flights from Thursday to stem spread of coronavirus

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# [Kuwait increases ministries budget by 500m](#)

Author:

Reuters

ID:

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Mon, 2020-03-16 17:03

CAIRO: Kuwait's cabinet approved a bill on Monday to increase the budget of ministries and governmental departments by 500 million Kuwaiti dinars (\$1.6 billion) for the 2020/21 fiscal year due to the coronavirus outbreak, state news agency (KUNA) reported.

The cabinet also established a temporary fund for receiving financial contributions from institutions, companies, and individuals to support the government's efforts to fight coronavirus, KUNA said.



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Kuwait to halt commercial passenger flights, declare public holiday  
Saudi Arabia limits entry by land from UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain amid coronavirus threat