

# Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia fail to reach agreement on Nile dam

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By SAMY MAGDY | AP

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CAIRO: Irrigation ministers from three key Nile Basin countries wrapped up a two-day meeting Saturday in Sudan's capital without resolving differences over Ethiopia's soon-to-be-finished Blue Nile dam, with Egypt calling for international mediation to help reach a "fair and balanced" agreement. Sudan Irrigation Minister Yasser Abbas told reporters in Khartoum that progress was made but differences on filling the giant reservoir and operating rules of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam remain unsettled. He said Ethiopia proposed a plan to fill the reservoir over four to seven years, without elaborating. He added that the three countries would continue consultations without giving a time frame.

Egypt's Irrigation Ministry, meanwhile, said in a statement after the meeting that talks have stalemated, claiming Ethiopia rejected "all proposals that ... avoid causing substantial damage to Egypt."

"Ethiopia ... offered a new proposal that contradicts previously agreed principles governing the filling and operating process," said Muhammed el-Sebai, spokesman of the ministry.

He said Egypt has called for international mediation "to help reach a fair and balanced agreement that protect the three countries' rights."

Ethiopia did not immediately respond.

Egyptian presidency spokesman Bassam Radi said Egypt was looking forward to an "instrumental role" by the US in the talks. He said because there was no breakthrough in negotiations, there was a need for an "international instrumental role to overcome the current deadlock."

White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham said Thursday the US supports Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan's negotiations to reach a sustainable and mutually beneficial agreement.

"All Nile Valley countries have a right to economic development and prosperity," Grisham said. "The administration calls on all sides to put forth good faith efforts to reach an agreement that preserves those rights, while simultaneously respecting each other's Nile water equities."

Egypt fears the dam could reduce its share of the Nile River, which serves as a lifeline for the country's 100 million people. Ethiopia has roughly the same population and says the dam will help its economic development.





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## [Anguish for jailed UK-Iranian mum at sending daughter to Britain](#)

Author:

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LONDON: The husband of a British-Iranian mother jailed in Tehran since 2016 said on Saturday the couple's decision to send their five-year-old daughter to him in Britain to start school was "bittersweet."

Richard Ratcliffe, whose wife Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe is serving a five-

year term for sedition, told AFP he is looking forward to seeing daughter Gabriella for the first time in more than three years.

But she has been staying with relatives in Iran since her mother's detention and visiting her in jail each week, so he fears the impact of the change. "It will be bittersweet," Ratcliffe said, adding they hoped Gabriella will be back in London by Christmas.

"It will be lovely to have her back... and then also we will be weary of the fallout for Nazanin," Ratcliffe added, noting Gabriella had been "her lifeline and that lifeline will have been taken away."

Zaghari-Ratcliffe, 40, stated in an open letter released earlier this week that Gabriella, who only speaks a few words of English, would return to Britain "in the near future."

"My baby will leave me to go to her father and start school in the UK," she wrote.

"It will be a daunting trip for her traveling, and for me left behind.

"And the authorities who hold me will watch on, unmoved at the injustice of separation," Zaghari-Ratcliffe added, describing being apart from her daughter as the "deepest torture of them all."

Zaghari-Ratcliffe was arrested in April 2016 as she was leaving Iran after taking their then 22-month-old daughter to visit her family.

She was sentenced to five years for allegedly trying to topple the Iranian government.

A project manager with the Thomson Reuters Foundation, the media group's philanthropic arm, she denies all charges.

The case has unfolded amid escalating tensions between Tehran and the West, particularly with the United States and Britain.

Her detention in Iran has included a week-long transfer to a mental health ward of a public hospital earlier this year.

Husband Ratcliffe said they had applied for an exit visa for Gabriella but were unsure how long it would take.

"I would be very surprised if it doesn't happen, but I wouldn't be surprised if it takes a bit of time," he added.

In her open letter, addressed to "the mothers of Iran," Zaghari-Ratcliffe said she had little hope of being released imminently.

"My hope for freedom from my own country died in my heart years back," she stated.

"I have no hope or motivation after my baby goes. There is no measure to my pain."

In response to the letter, rights group Amnesty UK called on Tehran to free the mother.

"It's time for Iran to end this cruel punishment," it said.



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## [Tunisia presidential runner Saied quits campaigning](#)

Author:

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TUNIS: Tunisian presidential candidate Kais Saied announced Saturday that he was quitting campaigning, in order to avoid an unfair advantage over his jailed opponent Nabil Karoui.

"I will not personally campaign on moral grounds, to avoid any doubt over the fairness between the candidates," Saied wrote on his Facebook page.

An independent professor of law, Saied won the first round of voting on

September 15 with a low-budget grassroots campaign conducted largely via Facebook. He remained low-key after the vote, avoiding some television appearances.

His rival, media mogul Karoui, has been under investigation since 2017 for money laundering and tax evasion and was arrested on August 23 – a week before the campaigning started for the first round presidential vote.

With the run-off vote scheduled for October 13, Tunisia's president, the United Nations, international observers and numerous politicians have called for "equal opportunity" between the two candidates.

Interim president Mohamed Ennaceur warned Friday that Karoui's detention was "an abnormal situation that could have serious and dangerous repercussions on the electoral process."

The United Nations called for "peaceful and transparent" elections.

Karoui accuses his political rivals, notably Ennahdha, of politicizing the judicial process.

His supporters have raised the possibility of appealing the outcome if Karoui isn't elected.

Saied nonetheless stressed his "deep conviction that equal opportunities must also include the means available to both candidates," referring to Karoui's media and financial empire mobilized for his campaign.

Karoui has campaigned via Nessma – the leading private television channel that he founded – and through his wife Salwa Smaoui, who has given interviews to local and international media.

The drama of the presidential race has eclipsed Sunday's legislative elections, a key vote for this country that led the Arab Spring, where parliament has a wide prerogative over crucial issues including the economy.



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## [Monitor: 9 militants killed in Russia strikes on Idlib](#)

Author:

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BEIRUT: Nine militants were killed Saturday in Russian airstrikes on Syria's war-torn province of Idlib, a monitoring group said.

"Russian strikes this morning targeted the Hurras Al-Deen group and Ansar Al-Tahwid in eastern Idlib... killing nine jihadists," said the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, adding eight others were wounded.

Six of the dead were members of the Al-Qaeda linked Hurras Al-Deen, a group which is also targeted by the US-led coalition.

Moscow is a key ally of Syria's President Bashar Assad in the country's civil war, and despite an Idlib cease-fire deal reached on August 31, the province has continued to be targeted by Russian air attacks.

Russia-backed regime fighters have for weeks been chipping away at the edges of the province bordering Turkey that is the last militant stronghold outside of Assad's control.

Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham – a group led by Syria's former Al-Qaeda affiliate – extended its administrative control over the whole of Idlib in January, but other rebel factions remain present.

In late August, clashes between anti-government fighters and regime forces left more than 50 dead on both sides, when the militia attacked loyalist positions in the south.

Last month, Russia and China vetoed a UN Security Council resolution backed by 12 of the 15 member states that called for a cease-fire in Idlib province.

It was Russia's 13th veto of a UN resolution since the Syrian conflict

erupted in 2011, highlighting the Security Council's impasse over the issue.

The Syrian war has killed more than 370,000 people and displaced millions since it erupted in 2011 with the brutal repression of anti-government protests.



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## [Secondary school reopened, named after Mo Salah in his hometown](#)

Author:

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CAIRO: The Egyptian city of Bassioun, in the governorate of Gharbia, has inaugurated the Mohamed Salah Military Industrial Secondary School, the first of its kind in the city and among the best 27 technical schools in Egypt. The school, named after the 27-year-old Egyptian Liverpool star, is located in Salah's hometown Nagrig, 100 km north of Cairo. It was renovated for 12.3 million Egyptian pounds (\$770,000), is built on 12,447 square meters and accommodates 2,715 students, with an average of 37 students a class. Salah paid for the renovation and also financed a football field in the school to discover new emerging talents.

"Mohamed Salah is the pride of Egyptian and international football," Mohamed Hassan, a teacher in the school, said. "I am proud that he was one of my students 10 years ago. May God bless him.

"The achievement by Salah is unique. Thanks to God, the people of Egypt have an ambassador to the world," Hassan added.

Former Governor Ahmed Daif Saqr took the initial decision to name the school after Salah when he scored the goal that sent Egypt to the 2018 World Cup. The school stands as a tribute to the successes of Salah after his achievements in the Premier League and Champions League that have attracted worldwide recognition.

Maher Shetay, the mayor of Nagrig, said the village people were happy to build the school, noting that it is being supervised by the Ministry of Education and the province of Gharbia.

Shetay pointed out that the school has great facilities and a remarkable playground, stressing that everyone looks up to the big role that it will play to shape the future of the children of Nagrig.

## **HIGHLIGHT**

The school, named after the 27-year-old Egyptian Liverpool star, accommodates 2,715 students, with an average of 37 students a class.

"Parents are racing to admit their children," Shetay said.

"I play football on the streets every day for hours hoping to become like Mohamed Salah one day," Abdel-Rahman Marzouk, a 14-year-old living in Gharbia, told Arab News.

"It's my dream. The new school has a playground and I'm excited to learn and play at the same time."

Nasser Hassan, undersecretary of the Ministry of Education in Gharbia, said that in accordance with the new directives, classes do not exceed 45 students in kindergarten, which is unprecedented in the history of the province.

Hassan said 30 new schools were built last year for 253 million pounds (\$16 million) and work is underway in 30 other schools this year in order to reach a maximum of 30 students in each classroom.

Fathi Abu Hindi, director of the technical education sector in Gharbia, said the school is a model and a "practical simulation" to promote technical education in Egypt.



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