

Libya's coast guard intercepts 31 Europe-bound migrants

Author:

Associated Press

ID:

1569948361933487800

Tue, 2019-10-01 16:16

CAIRO: Libya's coast guard says it has intercepted around three dozen Europe-bound migrants off the country's Mediterranean coast.

Tuesday's statement by spokesman Ayoub Gassim says the rubber boat with 31 African migrants was stopped on Sunday off the western city of Sabratha. Sabratha is one of the biggest launching points for migrants making the dangerous voyage across the Mediterranean Sea.

Gassim says the migrants were taken to a detention center in the western town of Zawiya.

He also said the coast guard arrested 15 Tunisian fishermen allegedly for illegal fishing in Libya's waters. There was no immediate comment from Tunisia's authorities.

Libya slid into chaos after the 2011 uprising that toppled and killed Muammar Qaddafi. It has emerged as a major transit point for migrants fleeing war and poverty to Europe.



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Migrant death toll in Mediterranean tops 1,000 for 6th year: UNHCR
Greece steps up migrant transfers after Lesbos clashes

[Iran convicts 4 on espionage charges](#)

Author:

AFP

ID:

1569944286862976600

Tue, 2019-10-01 14:18

TEHRAN: Iran's judiciary on Tuesday announced it had convicted four people on charges of spying for the United States or Britain, sentencing one of them to death.

"Last week, a person accused of espionage for an American (intelligence) service was sentenced to death by a revolutionary court," judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaili told a press conference.

Esmaili did not name the accused but said the identity would be revealed if the verdict is confirmed by the supreme court.

The spokesman also did disclose the names of the other three, each sentenced to 10 years in prison.

Ali Nafariyeh and Mohammad-Ali Babapour were convicted of spying for the US and fined \$55,000, the amount they were allegedly paid for collaborating with Washington.

Mohammad Amin-Nassab was found guilty of spying for Britain.

Tehran announced in July it had dismantled a CIA spy ring, arresting 17 suspects and sentencing some of them to death.

Iranian authorities said the arrests were carried out between March 2018 and March 2019.

US President Donald Trump dismissed the claim as "totally false."

In mid-September, Iran charged three detained Australians with spying, after the reported arrest of a travel-blogging couple and an academic.



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Iran court cuts Rouhani brother jail term to 5 years
CBS interview: Saudi Crown Prince talks Khashoggi, Yemen, Iran and women rights

[Jordan's striking teachers reject government call to return to work](#)

Author:

Reuters

ID:

1569941446192607100

Tue, 2019-10-01 12:31

AMMAN: Tens of thousands of Jordanian teachers on Tuesday defied a government call to end their four-week nationwide strike over pay, in a deepening crisis that threatens to further strain the heavily indebted country's state finances.

The powerful Jordanian Teachers' Syndicate on Saturday rejected as "bread

crumbs" modest pay increases offered by Prime Minister Omar Al-Razzaz in a bid to end the strike, which is already the longest by state employees in decades.

The strike comes as Jordan struggles to implement tough IMF-backed fiscal reforms.

Only a quarter of Jordan's 4,000 public schools opened on Tuesday and a fraction of its 1.5 million or so students turned up for lessons, in what economists said was a blow to the Razzaz government, which came to power in 2018 after street protests over IMF-backed austerity measures.

Scuffles broke out in several schools between parents and striking teachers, according to two witnesses, and state media reported that many teachers had prevented pupils from entering classrooms, asking them instead to go home. Many parents are not sending their children to school out of solidarity with the striking teachers.

The teachers' union, which has 100,000 members, is demanding a 50% pay hike. Razzaz says pay increases that took effect this month averaging \$35 per month were the most Jordan could afford.

His government has said teachers could lose their jobs over what it describes as an illegal action.

The teachers, whose average salary is around 450 dinars (\$630) per month, say they have fallen behind others in a bloated public sector plagued by corruption and mismanagement.

Salaries eat up much of the \$13 billion state budget in a country which has one of the world's highest levels of government spending relative to the size of its economy.

The government fears that new pay demands by other public sector employees, including doctors, and pension increases for retired soldiers would wreck efforts to restore fiscal prudence as a basis for a sustained economic recovery.

The fiscal plan agreed with the International Monetary Fund aims to cut Jordan's public debt of \$40 billion, equivalent to 95 percent of GDP.



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Jordanian teachers' dispute with govt continues Mövenpick Jordan organizes campaign to help needy families

[Iran court cuts Rouhani brother jail term to 5 years](#)

Author:

AFP

ID:

1569940878182529500

Tue, 2019-10-01 12:14

TEHRAN: An Iranian court has reduced the jail sentence against President Hassan Rouhani's brother to five years on charges of corruption, a judiciary spokesman said Tuesday.

"Regarding the case of Hossein Fereydoun, the sentence of seven years handed down by the court of first instance has been reduced to five years," Gholamhossein Esmaili told a press conference.

Esmaili said the sentence was final as there was no further avenue of appeal. Fereydoun was also ordered to pay a fine and to pay back the bribes he was alleged to have received, the spokesman said without giving any figures. Fereydoun acted as a key adviser and gatekeeper to the president before his arrest in July 2017.

The brothers do not share the same name because Rouhani changed his when he was younger to a word meaning "cleric."

Fereydoun's trial opened in February. Very few details have emerged in the Iranian press.



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UAE and Bahrain urge world leaders to act against Iran Trump says he refused to lift sanctions for an Iran meeting despite Rouhani claims

[Morocco's king suffers from acute](#)

[viral pneumonia](#)

Sun, 2019-09-29 23:33

CAIRO: Morocco's King Mohammed VI has been advised to rest for several days to recover from a viral lung infection, canceling his immediate plans, the Royal Court said in a statement issued but the state-run MAP.

The statement said that the king was exposed to acute viral pneumonia, and as a result, would not be able to attend a remembrance ceremony in Paris for France's late president Jacques Chirac, the palace said on Sunday.

In a rare statement on the health of the 56-year-old monarch, who last year underwent heart surgery, the palace said Mohammed had been unable to attend the commemoration event for Chirac, who died last week aged 86.

The palace noted in its statement the "strong ties" between the Chirac family and the ruling dynasty in Morocco, a former French protectorate.

"The King had decided to travel to France to offer condolences to the family and relatives of the late President Jacques Chirac, in a special framework, in view of the strong and deep relations that have always brought the two countries together and the special bond that the king has for France," the statement added.

Chirac served as French president from 1995 to 2005. His funeral will take place on Monday and Crown Prince Moulay El-Hassan will represent Morocco at the event.



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