

Jordan teachers launch strike, demand pay raise

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Sun, 2019-09-08 18:56

AMMAN: Teachers in Jordan are launching an open-ended strike after negotiations with the government failed to yield a raise.

A Jordanian teacher's union announced the strike Sunday, saying the government hasn't implemented a 50% salary increase agreed upon in 2014. Jordan is a staunch military and political ally of the West in a turbulent region. In June, 2018, a proposed tax hike triggered strikes and the largest anti-government protests in recent years, eventually leading King Abdullah II to replace his prime minister.

On Thursday, thousands of Jordanian teachers protested in the capital, Amman, demanding higher wages. Some scuffled with security forces during the demonstration.

The Education Ministry says it is committed to dialogue with teachers but said pay raises must be tied to better performance.



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Amman comes to a standstill as teachers demand 50% pay rise
Jordan Tourism Board to attract visitors with Wego

[Charity boat rescues 50 African migrants in sea off Libya](#)

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By RENATA BRITO | AP

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1567968376587920500

Sun, 2019-09-08 17:45

ABOARD THE OCEAN VIKING: Humanitarian groups SOS Mediterranee and Doctors Without Borders rescued 50 migrants on Sunday from a rubber dinghy off Libya's coast and brought them aboard their charity ship, Ocean Viking. An AP journalist aboard the Norwegian-flagged Ocean Viking witnessed the rescue of a pregnant woman, 12 minors and 37 men, all from sub-Saharan Africa. It happened about 14 nautical miles (16 statute miles) from Libya. Libyan authorities, responsible for search and rescue in that area of the Mediterranean, didn't answer multiple contact attempts by Ocean Viking. Authorities in Rome and Malta, when contacted, referred Ocean Viking to their Libyan counterparts. A fishing vessel, seen near the rubber boat, didn't respond to contact.

A European Union plane from Operation Sophia overflew Ocean Viking, the dinghy and the fishing boat multiple times shortly before the people were rescued.

In Greece, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis has criticized Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan for a statement he made last week about opening the gates for Syrian refugees to massively migrate into Europe. Mitsotakis said at a news conference in the northern Greek city of Thessaloniki that Erdogan can't "threaten" Greece and the European Union by trying to wrest more money to deal with mass migration, adding that the bloc has already provided Turkey with 6 billion euros in aid.

Mitsotakis also criticized EU countries for not doing their part to accept refugees, especially unaccompanied children, saying that if they couldn't show solidarity with fellow EU members, they should leave the Schengen area of free peoples' movement.



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Four wounded in rocket fire on Libyan capital's airport
UN envoy on Libya warns conflict could trigger chaos

[Kuwaiti Emir postpones Trump meeting after being admitted to hospital in US](#)

Sun, 2019-09-08 20:37

DUBAI: Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has postponed a meeting with Donald Trump after he was admitted to hospital in the US for medical tests.

Sheikh Sabah, 90, had been due to meet Trump on Thursday, the state news agency KUNA reported.

A date for the meeting would be set later, Minister of Amiri Diwan Sheikh Jarrah Al-Sabah said.



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[Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah](#)

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[Donald Trump](#)

Kuwaiti Emir: We must resist all those bent on spreading confessional discord in our society
Trump praises relations with Kuwait during meeting with the Emir Sheikh Sabah

[Sudan's first post-Bashir cabinet sworn in](#)

Author:

Sun, 2019-09-08 19:45

KHARTOUM: Sudan's first cabinet since the ouster of president Omar Al-Bashir was sworn in Sunday as the African country transitions to a civilian rule

following nationwide protests that overthrew the autocrat.

The 18-member cabinet led by Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, which includes four women, took oath at the presidential palace in Khartoum, an AFP correspondent reported.

It is expected to steer the daily affairs of the country during a transition period of 39 months.

The line-up was formed after Sudan last month swore in a "sovereign council" – a joint civilian-military ruling body that aims to oversee the transition. The 18 ministers were seen greeting members of the sovereign council, including its chief General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, in images broadcast by state television from the palace.

"We have to put in a lot of efforts to meet our people's demands," Information Minister Faisal Mohamed Saleh told reporters after the swearing in ceremony.

"The world is watching us. It is waiting to see how we can solve our issues." The sovereign council itself is the result of a power-sharing deal between the protesters and generals who had seized power after the army ousted Bashir in April.

Hamdok's cabinet, which has the country's first female foreign affairs minister, is expected to lead Sudan through formidable challenges that also include ending internal conflicts in three regions.

Rebel groups from marginalized regions of Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan states had waged long wars against Bashir's forces.

"The road ahead is not easy. We will face many challenges but we have to work on them," said Walaa Issam, Minister for youth and sports.

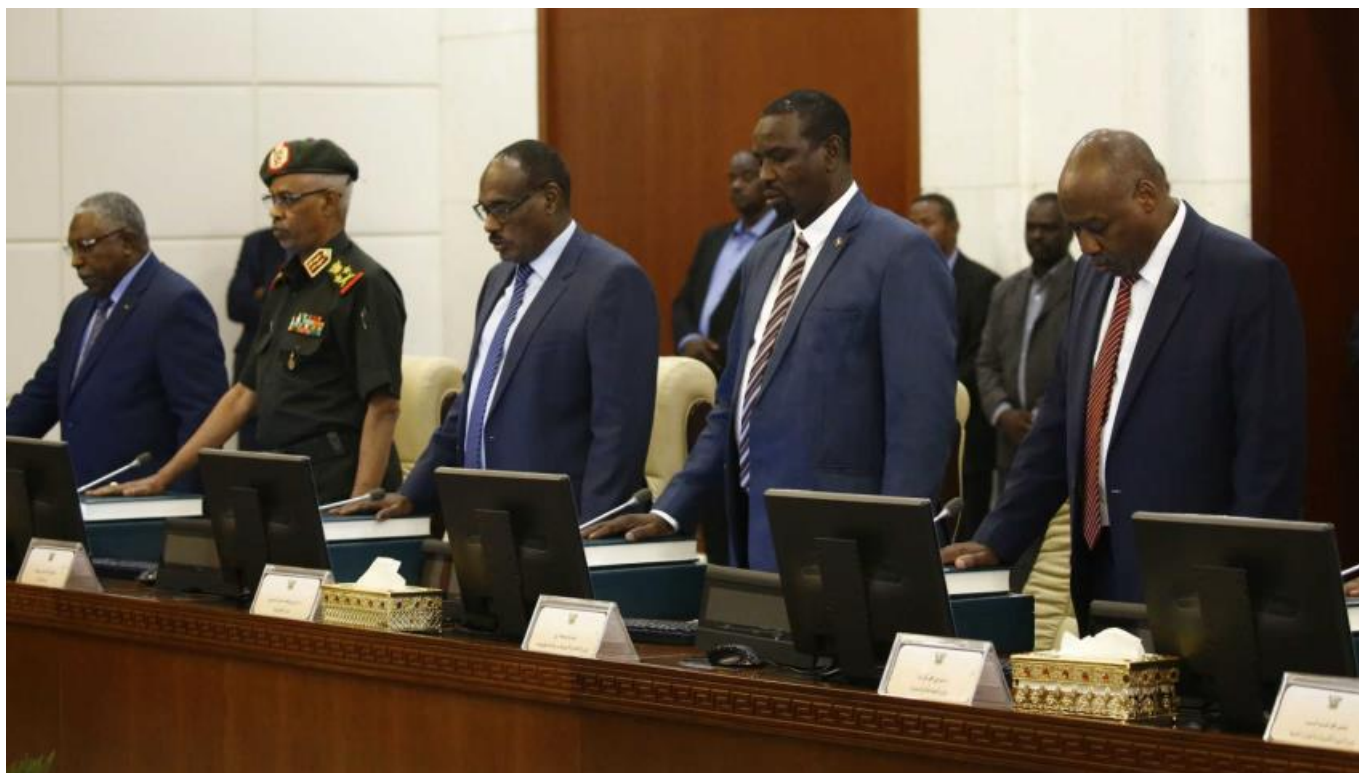
Sudan's power-sharing deal aims to forge peace with armed groups.

Hamdok's cabinet will also be expected to fight corruption and dismantle the long-entrenched Islamist deep state created under Bashir.

Bashir had seized power in an Islamist-backed coup in 1989 and ruled Sudan with an iron fist for three decades until his ouster.

It was a worsening economic crisis that triggered the fall of Bashir, who is now on trial on charges of illegal acquisition and use of foreign funds. According to doctors linked to the umbrella protest movement that led to Bashir's fall, more than 250 people have been killed in protest-related violence since December.

Of that at least 127 were killed in early June during a brutal crackdown on a weeks-long protest sit-in outside the military headquarters in Khartoum. Officials have given a lower death toll.



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Sudan announces first Cabinet since Al-Bashir's ouster
Sudan's post-Bashir transition faces further delay

[IAEA found uranium traces at Iran 'atomic warehouse'](#)

Sun, 2019-09-08 18:33

VIENNA: Samples taken by the UN nuclear watchdog at what Israel's prime minister called a "secret atomic warehouse" in Tehran showed traces of uranium that Iran has yet to explain, two diplomats who follow the agency's inspections work closely say.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is investigating the particles' origin and has asked Iran to explain the traces. But Tehran has not done so, according to the diplomats, stoking tensions between Washington and Tehran. US sanctions have slashed Iranian oil sales and Iran has responded by breaching its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers.

In a speech a year ago Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who vehemently opposed the deal, called on the IAEA to visit the site

immediately, saying it had housed 15 kg (33 lb) of unspecified radioactive material that had since been removed.

Reuters first reported in April that the IAEA, which is policing the nuclear deal, had inspected the site – a step it had said it takes “only when necessary” – and environmental samples taken there were sent off for analysis.

Israeli and US media have since reported that the samples turned up traces of radioactive material or matter – the same vague language used by Netanyahu. Those traces were, however, of uranium, the diplomats said – the same element Iran is enriching and one of only two fissile elements with which one can make the core of a nuclear bomb. One diplomat said the uranium was not highly enriched, meaning it was not purified to a level anywhere close to that needed for weapons.

“There are lots of possible explanations,” that diplomat said. But since Iran has not yet given any to the IAEA it is hard to verify the particles’ origin, and it is also not clear whether the traces are remnants of material or activities that predate the landmark 2015 deal or more recent, diplomats say. The IAEA did not respond to a request for comment. Iranian officials were not available to comment.

The deal imposed tight restrictions on Iran’s nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief, and was based on drawing a line under Iran’s past activities. Both the IAEA and US intelligence services believe Iran had a nuclear weapons program that it ended more than a decade before the deal. Iran says its nuclear ambitions have always been peaceful.

Hawks such as Netanyahu, who has repeatedly accused Iran of seeking Israel’s destruction, point to Tehran’s past to argue that it can never be trusted. The Islamic Republic’s previous secrecy might explain why uranium traces were found at a location that was never declared to the IAEA.

The IAEA takes environmental samples because they can pick up telltale particles even long after material has been removed from a site. Uranium traces could indicate, for example, the former presence of equipment or material somehow connected to those particles.

Cornel Feruta, the IAEA’s acting director-general, met Iranian officials on Sunday. An IAEA statement said afterwards: “Feruta stressed that these interactions (on its nuclear commitments) require full and timely cooperation by Iran.”

The United States, pulled out of the nuclear deal last year by President Donald Trump, is trying to force Iran to negotiate a more sweeping agreement, covering Tehran’s ballistic missiles and regional behavior, than the current accord.

Iran says it will not negotiate until it is granted relief from US sanctions, which France is trying to broker. In the meantime, Iran is breaching the deal’s restrictions on its nuclear activities step-by-step in response to what it calls US “economic warfare.”

A quarterly IAEA report issued a week ago did not mention the sample results because inspection-related matters are highly confidential. But it did say Iran’s cooperation could be better.

“Ongoing interactions between the Agency and Iran...require full and timely cooperation by Iran. The Agency continues to pursue this objective with Iran,” the report said.

It is far from the first time Iran has dragged its feet in its interactions

with the IAEA over the agency's non-proliferation mandate. The IAEA has made similar calls in previous reports, in relation to promptly granting access for inspections.

The IAEA has likened its work to nuclear accounting, patiently combing through countries' statements on their nuclear activities and materials, checking them and when necessary seeking further explanations before reaching a conclusion, which can take a long time.

The process of seeking an explanation from Iran has lasted two months, the IAEA's safeguards division chief told member states in a briefing on Thursday, diplomats present said. But he described what it was seeking an answer to far more generally as questions about Iran's declaration of nuclear material and activities, since the details are confidential.

"It is not something that is so unique to Iran. The agency has these cases in many other situations," a senior diplomat said when asked about the current standoff with Iran. "Depending on the engagement it can take two months, six months."

That does not mean all member states will be happy to wait.

"IAEA Acting Director General going to Iran just as IAEA informs its Board that #Iran may be concealing nuclear material and/or activities," US National Security Adviser John Bolton said on Twitter on Saturday. "We join with other @iaeaorg Board member states eager to get a full report as soon as possible." The IAEA's policy-making, 35-nation Board of Governors holds a week-long quarterly meeting starting on Monday.





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Iran's enriched uranium stock grows well past deal's cap, says IAEA report
Netanyahu: Israel discovered second atomic storage facility in Iran