

# Tunisia court upholds continued detention of presidential candidate

Author:

Reuters

ID:

1567535182115745400

Tue, 2019-09-03 17:30

TUNIS: A Tunisian appeals court on Tuesday upheld the detention of media magnate Nabil Karoui, a candidate in this month's presidential election, on suspicion of tax fraud and money laundering, his lawyer said.

Karoui, who denies any wrongdoing, had sought to be freed, but the court rejected the demand to release him, lawyer Kamel Ben Massoud told Reuters without giving details or further comment.

Karoui, the owner of Nesma TV channel, is one of the most prominent candidates in the Sept. 15 election along with current and past prime ministers, a former president, the defense minister and the representative of a major Islamist party.

He is running as a campaigner against poverty in a country where economic troubles have caused widespread frustration despite the transition to democracy since a 2011 revolution.

Karoui founded a charity to combat poverty in 2017 and then set up a political party, leading his critics to accuse him of using his foundation to advance his political ambitions, which he denies.

In June, parliament passed an amendment to the electoral law forbidding candidates who benefited from "charitable associations" or foreign funding in the year before an election, which would have banned him from the race.

However, the late president Beji Caid Essebsi died in July without having signed the law, meaning Karoui was free to enter the election.

His political party has called his detention a politically motivated attempt to bar him from the race, though government officials have said it is a purely judicial matter.

Tunisia's electoral commission kept him on the list of eligible candidates after his arrest last month on a court order.

The president is responsible for foreign and defense policy in Tunisia, while most decision-making powers rest with a prime minister who is chosen by parliament. A parliamentary election will also take place on Oct. 6.

Despite Karoui still being in detention, his party launched his presidential campaign with a rally on Monday night. On Tuesday, supporters gathered outside the court to demand he be freed.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Tunisia](#)

Presidential campaigns kick off in Tunisia Security official killed in clashes with militants in Tunisia

---

## [FM says Germany working to end Sudan's pariah status](#)

Author:

By SAMY MAGDY | AP

ID:

1567534926125721200

Tue, 2019-09-03 17:32

CAIRO: Germany's top diplomat said Tuesday his country has been working to readmit Sudan into the international economy after the military's overthrow of autocratic President Omar Al-Bashir in April amid mass protests against his three-decade rule.

Foreign Minister Heiko Maas landed in Sudan's capital, Khartoum, in the first such visit to the African country by a top German diplomat since 2011.

His trip was part of Germany's efforts to help overhaul Sudan's battered

economy and reach peace with armed groups, which remain among the top challenges facing the country's new administration.

It came two weeks after the formation of a power-sharing government by the pro-democracy movement and the generals, which will rule Sudan for a little more than three years until elections can be held.

Maas told a joint news conference in Khartoum with Sudan's newly appointed Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok that Berlin would discuss with the international community ways to end Sudan's international pariah status. He said his government would also discuss with the parliament, or Bundestag, in Berlin ways to cooperate on economic development with the new government in Sudan.

Maas also met with Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, head of Sudan's Sovereign Council. He said he "stressed the importance of transferring power to a civilian government."

The United States named Sudan a state sponsor of terror in 1993, and the designation stuck through the Al-Bashir regime. In 2017, Washington began a formal process to de-list Sudan, but this was put on hold when mass protests began in December. Moves to de-list Sudan could resume once the country's political situation has stabilized.

Hamdok, the prime minister, said he has held a "long discussion" with the US administration about removing Sudan from Washington's list of countries sponsoring terrorism.

"We are expecting a big breakthrough that will lead to removing Sudan from the terror list," he said. "It is a convenient circumstance."

De-listing Sudan would allow the transitional government to seek a bailout from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, part of its efforts to revive the ailing economy.

Hamdok told a local TV station last month that Sudan needs up to \$8 billion in foreign aid in the next two years and another \$2 billion deposited as reserves to shore up the plunging local currency.

Sudan was plunged into an economic crisis when the oil-rich south seceded in 2011 after decades of war, taking with it more than half of public revenues and 95% of exports. Sudan has been battling rebellions in its long-neglected provinces for decades and is nearly \$60 billion in debt.

Hamdok also said in the press conference that he would work with rebel groups to achieve "sustainable peace" that would eventually lead to a slash in military spending, which takes up as much as 80% of the state budget.

Sudan has also been convulsed by rebellions in its far-flung provinces for decades, and while a rebel alliance has joined the pro-democracy coalition, it argues that it should be represented in the transitional government.

The power-sharing deal calls for the government to reach a peace agreement with the rebels within six months.

The Sovereign Council said Hamdok, a former UN official, would announce his Cabinet within 48 hours. According to the power-sharing agreement, the protest-appointed Cabinet was to have been announced late in August.

Hamdok is tasked with forming a Cabinet of not more than 20 ministers, but the military will nominate the defense and interior ministers.

He said his talks with the protest leaders were still ongoing to ensure adequate representation for women and all of Sudan's regions in the transitional government.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Sudan](#)

[Germany](#)

German foreign minister Maas arrives in Sudan Saudi Arabia sends vital humanitarian assistance to flood-stricken Sudan

---

## [US sanctions Iran's space program](#)

Tue, 2019-09-03 21:06

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration imposed sanctions Tuesday on Iran's space agency for the first time, accusing it of developing ballistic missiles under the cover of a civilian program to launch satellites into orbit. The sanctions announced by the State and Treasury departments targeting the agency and two of its affiliates follow the explosion Thursday of a rocket at Iran's Imam Khomeini Space Center in what an Iranian official said was a technical malfunction during a test. Following the explosion, President Donald Trump tweeted a surveillance image depicting the apparent aftermath of the incident and declared that the US had nothing to do with what transpired

at the launch site.

With the latest sanctions, the Trump administration can subject foreign companies and governments, including international space cooperation organizations, to penalties if they have any involvement with the Iranian space agency. They would also freeze any of the agency's assets in US jurisdictions, though there aren't likely to be any given the state of relations between the two nations.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the "urgency of the threat" was underscored by Iran's recent attempt to launch a space vehicle. "The United States will not allow Iran to use its space launch program as cover to advance its ballistic missile programs," he said in a statement announcing the sanctions.

Officials said the move was not directly related to last week's explosion but that the surveillance image provided evidence of the U.S. assertion that the Iranian space program is used to develop missiles, including ones capable of carrying nuclear warheads or other weapons of mass destruction over long distances.

The sanctions are part of the Trump administration's escalating campaign of economic and diplomatic measures against Iran since unilaterally withdrawing last year from an international accord that was intended to curb the Iranian nuclear program.

Iran insists it is developing rockets to launch satellites into space, which it has done twice since 2013. The explosion marked the third failure involving a rocket at the Iranian center, which has raised suspicions of sabotage in Iran's space program.

Iran government spokesman Ali Rabiei said Monday the explosion was "a technical matter and a technical error."

Commercially available satellite images by Planet Labs Inc. and Maxar Technologies showed a black plume of smoke rising above a launch pad Thursday, with what appeared to be the charred remains of a rocket and its launch stand. In previous days, satellite images had shown officials there had repainted the launch pad blue.

The blast followed failed launches of the Payam and Doosti satellites in January and February. A separate fire at the Imam Khomeini Space Center in February also killed three researchers, authorities said at the time.

Iran is preparing to launch the Nahid-1, a communication satellite, into space.

The U.S. alleges such satellite launches defy a UN Security Council resolution calling on Iran to undertake no activity related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Iran](#)

[space](#)

[satellite](#)

France condemns failed Iran satellite launch, urges halt to missile tests  
Satellite photos shows burning rocket at Iranian space center

---

## [Israel says Hezbollah plans advanced missile plant in Lebanon's Bekaa](#)

Author:

Reuters

ID:

1567531578965480000

Tue, 2019-09-03 16:01

JERUSALEM: Israel accused Hezbollah on Tuesday of setting up a factory for precision-guided missiles in Lebanon's Bekaa valley, in a veiled warning of further possible Israeli counter-strikes after a drone attack near Beirut set

off brief cross-border fighting.

Sunday's shelling exchange was the fiercest between Israel and Hezbollah since the 2006 Lebanon war. While neither is keen to escalate, Israel has said it could act against any upgrades of Hezbollah's missile arsenal, while Hezbollah has said it would retaliate for attacks on Lebanese soil.

In a statement to media accompanied by satellite images, the Israeli military said that Hezbollah, with Iranian assistance, had been bringing specialized equipment to a weapons factory near the Bekaa village of Al-Nabi Sheet with a view to setting up a production line for precision-guidance missiles. Hezbollah recently moved some of the equipment to "civilian locations" in Beirut as a precaution against strikes, the Israeli military statement said, alluding to tensions that surged after the Aug. 25 drone incident in Beirut's suburbs.

There was no immediate comment from Hezbollah, which has denied having precision-guided missile production sites in Lebanon. But it says it possess such weapons, which could be used to home in on and knock out key Israeli infrastructure.

In an Aug 31 speech, Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah accused Israel of using the movement's capability with precision-guided missiles as a pretext for attacks.

Israel has not formally claimed responsibility for the Beirut drone strike, which a regional security source said hit a component of the precision-guided missile project.

Hoping to move Beirut to rein in Hezbollah, Israel has signalled that in any further flare-up it could carry out widespread attacks on Lebanon.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Israel](#)

[Hezbollah](#)

Damascus hails Hezbollah attack on Israel across the Lebanese border  
Israel lifts Gaza fuel restriction after calm returns

---

## Lebanon summons Turkish ambassador after president raised Ottoman era atrocities

Author:

Tue, 2019-09-03 17:24

BEIRUT: Lebanon summoned the Turkish ambassador on Tuesday over a war of words relating to atrocities carried out during the Ottoman empire.

Beirut has been angered by a statement from the Turkish foreign ministry issued in response to a speech by President Michel Aoun, which referred to violence and killing during the Ottoman occupation of what became the state of Lebanon.

Hakan Cakil was ordered to attend the foreign ministry and asked for "clarifications about the statement and for clear correction of the mistake made by the Turkish side, to avoid misunderstanding and in preservation of the special bilateral ties."

Speaking on Saturday to mark the centennial of the formation of Greater Lebanon, Aoun referred to the "state terror practiced by the Ottomans against the Lebanese, especially during World War I."

He said there had been "hundreds of thousands of victims between famine, conscription and forced labor, without omitting the gallows through which they wanted to annihilate the spirit of emancipation and rebellion."

On Sunday, the Turkish foreign ministry issued an angry response, accusing Aoun's speech of being "baseless and biased." It also said "terror" had not taken place under Ottoman rule.

The row comes shortly after a visit to Lebanon by the Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu.





Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Ottoman](#)

[Ottoman Empire](#)

[Michel Aoun](#)

[Lebanon](#)

Ousted mayors in Turkey denounce 'political' sackings Turkey receives another S-400 missile system delivery from Russia