

# Yemen government blames separatists for Aden clashes

Author:

Thu, 2019-08-08 19:45

ADEN: Southern separatists and presidential guards fought for a second day on Thursday in Aden, with at least one person killed, residents said.

That followed three deaths and nine injuries when gunfire erupted between the rivals on Wednesday.

The separatists are nominally allied with President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi in a coalition battling the Iran-aligned Houthis. But they have rival agendas for Yemen and the separatists accused a Hadi-allied party of complicity in an attack last week on their soldiers.

Hadi's internationally recognized government Thursday blamed the separatist leaders for the flare up that "threatened the safety and stability of citizens and security and stability in general."

After Wednesday's funeral for some of the troops killed in last week's missile strike on a parade, separatist supporters fought with guards near the hilltop presidential palace in the Crater district of the southern port city, witnesses said.

Thursday's fatality came when fighting flared again and a stray bullet hit a man walking in the street, witnesses and his relatives said. Sounds of gunfire and heavy weaponry echoed into the evening while smoke and fire could be seen rising.

The UN envoy for Yemen and a senior UAE official have both called for calm in the city.



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Clashes erupt in Yemen's Aden, killing one Yemen's minister of information:  
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## P&O cancels Gulf cruises due to tensions

Author:

AFP

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Thu, 2019-08-08 15:10

LONDON: US-owned British company P&O Cruises on Thursday said it was canceling its program in the Gulf between October 2019 and March 2020 to guarantee the safety of guests and crew.

The move comes amid a spike in tensions in the region.

Iran has seized three tankers in strategically-important Gulf waters since last month, including a British-flagged vessel.

Britain on Monday said it would form a joint maritime taskforce with the United States to protect merchant vessels.

"The increased tension in the region... means as a British company flying the Red Ensign it is not advisable for us to maintain our planned Dubai and Arabian Gulf program this winter season," P&O Cruises president Paul Ludlow said in a statement.

"We have therefore taken the unusual step of withdrawing Oceana from the region for the upcoming season," he said.

The Red Ensign is the flag used by British merchant and passenger ships.

Guests would be given full refunds and the Oceana cruise ship will be used on alternative cruises, including to Spain, Portugal and the Caribbean.

The company said it was still planning Dubai and Arabian Gulf holidays for the 2020/2021 winter season.

P&O Cruises is owned by US-based Carnival Corporation.





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## [Tunisian minister submits bid to run for president](#)

Author:

Wed, 2019-08-07 23:40

TUNIS: Tunisian Defense Minister Abdelkarim Zbidi submitted his candidacy for a presidential election on Sept. 15 as an independent on Wednesday and said he would resign from government.

Zbidi, 69, who has the support of secular parties including Nidaa Tounes and Afek Tounes, is likely to emerge as one of the frontrunners in the election, which was called early after the death of President Beji Caid Essebsi last

month.

Zbidi, a technocrat and medical doctor by training, is considered by many to be above the party politics and infighting that has held back badly-needed economic reforms in Tunisia in recent years.

He looks set as the most serious rival to Prime Minister Youssef Chahed, who will run as a candidate for the liberal Tahya Tounes Party.

After Ben Ali's overthrow in 2011, Zbidi was appointed defense minister until he quit in March 2013 while serving in a Cabinet led by Ennahda. In 2017, Chahed re-appointed Zbidi as defense minister.

Tunisia's president controls foreign and defense policy, governing alongside a prime minister chosen by Parliament who has authority over domestic affairs.

Tunisia's biggest political party Ennahda Movement nominated its vice President Abdel Fattah Mourou as a candidate on Wednesday. He is the first presidential nominee from the moderate party since Tunisia transitioned to democracy after the 2011 uprising.

"The party's advisory council has voted by a majority of 98 votes in favor of Abdel Fattah Mourou's candidacy at the presidential election," Ennahda said in a statement.

Mourou, 71, was appointed interim parliamentary speaker following the death of President Essebsi.

The Ennahda politician had previously served as the deputy speaker, and changed roles after the then parliamentary head Mohamed Ennaceur stepped up as interim president.

The party's announcement marks "the first time in its history that the movement puts forward a candidate for the presidential elections," spokesman Imed Khmiri said.

Ennahda won the first polls after the 2011 uprising which ousted President Zine El-Abidine, and is currently the largest party in Parliament.

Mourou is known as a moderate and is one of the founding members of Ennahda, which was launched in 1981.

Presidential hopefuls have until Aug. 9 to register, ahead of the election on Sept. 15.

So far 27 people have submitted their candidacy to the electoral commission, including media magnate Nabil Karoui.

He was charged with money laundering in July, after stating his intention to stand in the polls.

Karoui is a fierce rival of Prime Minister Chahed, who is standing in the

presidential vote with his Tahia Tounes party.

They have been joined in the race by Abir Moussi, who heads a group formed from the remnants of Ben Ali's ruling party.



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Tunisia Islamist-inspired party announces presidential candidate  
Tunisia presidential hopefuls line up for September polls

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## [US, UK warn against escalating sectarianism in Lebanon](#)

Author:

Wed, 2019-08-07 22:44

BEIRUT: The US Embassy in Lebanon warned that “any attempt to exploit the tragic incident that took place in Kabreshmoun on June 30 to promote political objectives must be rejected.”

The statement comes during Lebanon's escalating political crisis, which has been ongoing for more than two months.

The crisis has peaked during the last 48 hours, where efforts aimed at reaching a political consensus on the judicial measures for the Kabreshmoun shooting have failed.

There was open confrontation between the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) and the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM), with the PSP including the Lebanese President Michel Aoun and the judiciary in its accusations.

"The US supports a fair and transparent judicial review free of any political influence. We clearly expressed to the Lebanese authorities that they are expected to handle the incident in a manner that achieves justice without inciting sectarian and regional conflicts with political backgrounds," said the US Embassy.

"Lebanon's stability is a priority to us," said Britain's Ambassador to Lebanon Chris Rampling as he visited Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri.

"We urge everyone to focus on economic development at this stage. The adoption of the state budget was an important first step but still needs a lot of work," Rampling added.

The shooting took place when the head of the FPM, Gebran Bassil, visited the site of massacres between Christians and Druze during the civil war.

Supporters of the PSP staged protests to prevent the visit, triggering a shootout after the arrival of the minister of the displaced, Saleh Al-Gharib. Two of his bodyguards were killed.

Minister Al-Gharib is a member of the PSP's rival party and an ally of Hezbollah and the Syrian regime.

The incident received significant political and judicial attention, which has paralyzed the government for over a month. The PSP accused the FPM of wanting to eliminate it by pressuring the military judiciary to manipulate the investigation.

Aoun affirmed his "commitment to the judiciary, which has the authority to act firmly and punish according to the laws," as he received a youth delegation on Wednesday.

Berri said that he "will not allow anything that could divide the Lebanese people," and that "political, security and financial stability is required from everyone, as international financial institutions are concerned about Lebanon's situation.

"A complete and comprehensive reconciliation is necessary to hold government sessions. There is no need for panic as it will vanish with the government's first session."

An international report on Lebanon's financial classification is expected to

be issued on Aug. 23, with the Lebanese Central Bank Gov. Riad Salameh rejecting suggestions that the country is bankrupt.



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## [Qatari tycoon brothers and Doha Bank sued for funding Syrian militants](#)

Wed, 2019-08-07 21:12

LONDON: Two billionaire Qatari brothers and a Doha-based bank are being sued in a British court for channeling cash to Al-Nusra Front militants in Syria.

Moutaz and Ramez Al-Khayyat are accused of using their accounts at Doha Bank to fund the Al-Qaeda-affiliated group. They are being sued at the High Court in London by eight Syrians who say they lost homes and businesses, and suffered physical and mental harm, because of Al-Nusra's activities.

The Syrian claimants live in Europe, and have been granted anonymity by the court.



“The Khayyat brothers financed and/or assisted in financing Al-Nusra Front, including through accounts held by them and/or entities associated with them at Doha Bank,” the lawsuit alleges.

The claimants say funds were sent through the bank to accounts in Turkey and Lebanon, where cash was withdrawn and taken across the Syrian border to the militants. “As a result of the defendants’ actions, Al-Nusra Front was able to cause loss and damage to the claimants,” the lawsuit says.

The claimants say Doha Bank and the two businessmen “knew (or ought to have known) that the funds that passed from them or through their accounts were intended for Al-Nusra Front,” and that they had therefore “breached international and national laws.”

A spokesman for Doha Bank said they were taking legal advice but believed the claim to be “groundless and without merit.”

The Khayyat brothers run Power International Holding, one of Qatar’s largest conglomerates, with interests in construction, property and dairy farming. One of their property developments is next to the Iranian Embassy in London.

Doha Bank’s largest shareholder is the Qatar Investment Authority, the state’s sovereign wealth fund, and its chairman is Sheikh Fahad bin Mohammad bin Jabor Al-Thani, a member of the ruling family.

The Anti-Terror Quartet of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt and Bahrain imposed a trade, travel and diplomatic boycott on Qatar in June 2017 because of Doha’s support for extremist groups and funding of terrorism.





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